

Gal 10 Of

FIVE
DISCOURSES,
CONTAINING
~~THE~~
CERTAIN ARGUMENTS
FOR AND AGAINST THE
RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY
BY THE
ANTIEN T JEWS AND GREEKS.

PREACHED AT CROYDON, IN SURRY,
By **JOHN IRELAND, A. M.**
VICAR OF THE SAID CHURCH.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,
ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY R. FAULDER,
NEW BOND STREET, HARDING, CROYDON,
AND TRUMAN AND SONS, EXETER.

1796.

11

DISCOURS

CESTYIN ARGUMENTS

INT 7321405 QUA 20

RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY

2000-01-01

ANNUAL REPORTS AND CREEKS.

1944-1945, 1946-1947, 1948-1949, 1950-1951, 1952-1953, 1954-1955, 1956-1957, 1958-1959, 1960-1961, 1962-1963, 1964-1965, 1966-1967, 1968-1969, 1970-1971, 1972-1973, 1974-1975, 1976-1977, 1978-1979, 1980-1981, 1982-1983, 1984-1985, 1986-1987, 1988-1989, 1990-1991, 1992-1993, 1994-1995, 1996-1997, 1998-1999, 2000-2001, 2002-2003, 2004-2005, 2006-2007, 2008-2009, 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2022-2023, 2024-2025, 2026-2027, 2028-2029, 2030-2031, 2032-2033, 2034-2035, 2036-2037, 2038-2039, 2040-2041, 2042-2043, 2044-2045, 2046-2047, 2048-2049, 2050-2051, 2052-2053, 2054-2055, 2056-2057, 2058-2059, 2060-2061, 2062-2063, 2064-2065, 2066-2067, 2068-2069, 2070-2071, 2072-2073, 2074-2075, 2076-2077, 2078-2079, 2080-2081, 2082-2083, 2084-2085, 2086-2087, 2088-2089, 2090-2091, 2092-2093, 2094-2095, 2096-2097, 2098-2099, 2100-2101, 2102-2103, 2104-2105, 2106-2107, 2108-2109, 2110-2111, 2112-2113, 2114-2115, 2116-2117, 2118-2119, 2120-2121, 2122-2123, 2124-2125, 2126-2127, 2128-2129, 2130-2131, 2132-2133, 2134-2135, 2136-2137, 2138-2139, 2140-2141, 2142-2143, 2144-2145, 2146-2147, 2148-2149, 2150-2151, 2152-2153, 2154-2155, 2156-2157, 2158-2159, 2160-2161, 2162-2163, 2164-2165, 2166-2167, 2168-2169, 2170-2171, 2172-2173, 2174-2175, 2176-2177, 2178-2179, 2180-2181, 2182-2183, 2184-2185, 2186-2187, 2188-2189, 2190-2191, 2192-2193, 2194-2195, 2196-2197, 2198-2199, 2200-2201, 2202-2203, 2204-2205, 2206-2207, 2208-2209, 2210-2211, 2212-2213, 2214-2215, 2216-2217, 2218-2219, 2220-2221, 2222-2223, 2224-2225, 2226-2227, 2228-2229, 2230-2231, 2232-2233, 2234-2235, 2236-2237, 2238-2239, 2240-2241, 2242-2243, 2244-2245, 2246-2247, 2248-2249, 2250-2251, 2252-2253, 2254-2255, 2256-2257, 2258-2259, 2260-2261, 2262-2263, 2264-2265, 2266-2267, 2268-2269, 2270-2271, 2272-2273, 2274-2275, 2276-2277, 2278-2279, 2280-2281, 2282-2283, 2284-2285, 2286-2287, 2288-2289, 2290-2291, 2292-2293, 2294-2295, 2296-2297, 2298-2299, 2300-2301, 2302-2303, 2304-2305, 2306-2307, 2308-2309, 2310-2311, 2312-2313, 2314-2315, 2316-2317, 2318-2319, 2320-2321, 2322-2323, 2324-2325, 2326-2327, 2328-2329, 2330-2331, 2332-2333, 2334-2335, 2336-2337, 2338-2339, 2340-2341, 2342-2343, 2344-2345, 2346-2347, 2348-2349, 2350-2351, 2352-2353, 2354-2355, 2356-2357, 2358-2359, 2360-2361, 2362-2363, 2364-2365, 2366-2367, 2368-2369, 2370-2371, 2372-2373, 2374-2375, 2376-2377, 2378-2379, 2380-2381, 2382-2383, 2384-2385, 2386-2387, 2388-2389, 2390-2391, 2392-2393, 2394-2395, 2396-2397, 2398-2399, 2400-2401, 2402-2403, 2404-2405, 2406-2407, 2408-2409, 2410-2411, 2412-2413, 2414-2415, 2416-2417, 2418-2419, 2420-2421, 2422-2423, 2424-2425, 2426-2427, 2428-2429, 2430-2431, 2432-2433, 2434-2435, 2436-2437, 2438-2439, 2440-2441, 2442-2443, 2444-2445, 2446-2447, 2448-2449, 2450-2451, 2452-2453, 2454-2455, 2456-2457, 2458-2459, 2460-2461, 2462-2463, 2464-2465, 2466-2467, 2468-2469, 2470-2471, 2472-2473, 2474-2475, 2476-2477, 2478-2479, 2480-2481, 2482-2483, 2484-2485, 2486-2487, 2488-2489, 2490-2491, 2492-2493, 2494-2495, 2496-2497, 2498-2499, 2500-2501, 2502-2503, 2504-2505, 2506-2507, 2508-2509, 2510-2511, 2512-2513, 2514-2515, 2516-2517, 2518-2519, 2520-2521, 2522-2523, 2524-2525, 2526-2527, 2528-2529, 2530-2531, 2532-2533, 2534-2535, 2536-2537, 2538-2539, 2540-2541, 2542-2543, 2544-2545, 2546-2547, 2548-2549, 2550-2551, 2552-2553, 2554-2555, 2556-2557, 2558-2559, 2560-2561, 2562-2563, 2564-2565, 2566-2567, 2568-2569, 2570-2571, 2572-2573, 2574-2575, 2576-2577, 2578-2579, 2580-2581, 2582-2583, 2584-2585, 2586-2587, 2588-2589, 2590-2591, 2592-2593, 2594-2595, 2596-2597, 2598-2599, 2600-2601, 2602-2603, 2604-2605, 2606-2607, 2608-2609, 2610-2611, 2612-2613, 2614-2615, 2616-2617, 2618-2619, 2620-2621, 2622-2623, 2624-2625, 2626-2627, 2628-2629, 2630-2631, 2632-2633, 2634-2635, 2636-2637, 2638-2639, 2640-2641, 2642-2643, 2644-2645, 2646-2647, 2648-2649, 2650-2651, 2652-2653, 2654-2655, 2656-2657, 2658-2659, 2660-2661, 2662-2663, 2664-2665, 2666-2667, 2668-2669, 2670-2671, 2672-2673, 2674-2675, 2676-2677, 2678-2679, 2680-2681, 2682-2683, 2684-2685, 2686-2687, 26

100-443887-100



UNCLASSIFIED

2005-06-11

RECEIVED THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
THE JUDGE
THE JUDGE
THE JUDGE

2071

THE
C O N T E N T S.

DISCOURSE I.

DEUTERONOMY, c. xv. v. 15. *Remember
that thou wast a bondman in the land of
Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed
thee.* page 11

DISCOURSE II.

DEUTERONOMY, c. vii. v. 6. *Thou art an
holy people unto the Lord thy God.* p. 41

DISCOURSE III.

St. LUKE, c. xix. v. 14. *We will not have
this man to reign over us.* p. 71

ROMANS,

CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE IV.

ROMANS, c. i. v. 16. *To every one that be-
lieveth, to the Jew first, and also to the
Greek.* p. 103

DISCOURSE V.

I EPIS. CORINTHIANS, c. ii. v. 14. *But
the natural man receiveth not the things of
the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness
unto him.* p. 135

DISCOURSE II.

DEUTERONOMY, c. vii. v. 6. *Thou art an
holy people unto the Lord thy God.* p. 41

DISCOURSE III.

ADVER-

St. Luke, c. xix. v. 14. *We will not have
this man to reign over us.* p. 71
ROMANS

ADVERTISEMENT.

I HOPE it is not necessary to apologize for the public appearance of the following Discourses. The Ministers of the Gospel, in addition to the care of approving themselves, under God, to their respective congregations, are required to convince society at large, that they are not negligent in their sacred offices. Hence arises an animating interchange of sentiment between the several parts of the Christian Community,

nity, and mutual confidence is the happy result of the known performance of duty.---To a revered Benefactor this persuasion more especially wishes to convey itself. May it impress him with the desire I feel of discharging, as well as I am able, the trust reposed in me by his unmerited condescension!

But, perhaps, it is rather to be explained, why I am thus adventurous with any branch of a subject so important as that of the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews and Greeks; a subject on which so much learning and piety have been already exerted; on which (not to mention

mention the frequent and full discussion of it by Ecclesiastical historians) sermons have occasionally issued from a Barrow, a Tillotson, a Clarke, a Secker, and other great names.---My only excuse is afforded by the accident which led me to the discussion.

An Illustrious Hearer had been pleased to express his approbation of a sermon written by me on the general question. Induced to think more particularly on what had drawn the attention of the noble Personage, and wishing to connect usefulness with curiosity of enquiry, I determined to contrast the re-

jection of Christianity with certain arguments which should rather have impelled the unbelievers to the acceptance of it. Five sermons were the result of the new plan. They form the whole of the present publication, which is offered as a specimen. The discourse which led to them is omitted, as a few of its thoughts are here employed, though in somewhat a different manner, and too much repetition was feared from its insertion.

The above statement will, I hope, plead the excuse of those imperfections, which the acute eye will not fail to discover in these sermons.

A pulpit

A pulpit that has not the advantage of calling itself Academick, must manage its topics (however susceptible they may be of scholastick treatment) in a manner that shall respect the general ear. A cautious establishment of premises, leading step by step to their proportioned conclusions, must give way to a slighter indication of the authorities from which complete evidence may be drawn: and, for the purpose of popular instruction, a fullness of consequence will sometimes be assumed, incommensurate with its antecedent proofs.

The

The subject, too large to be presented in its proper dimensions, will be compressed or curtailed. Claf-
fical remembrance will be kept in awe by the presence of the Bible, and, instead of the direct indulgence of literary facts, their general spirit will be more distantly insinuated. In short, what might elsewhere be formal discourses, supported by all the helps of immediate learning, become, in a parochial pulpit, little more than rapid or animated sketches.

During the process of this necessary caution which lay upon me, the notes have caught those particulars

culars which fell from the text. But if any pious reader should still lament the profane alliance which some of them will exhibit with a sacred subject, let him accept my apology in the words of St. Chrysostom :

Τάυτα δε ἡμιν οὐ Φιλοτιμίας ἐνεκεν εἰρηται, οὐδε πρὸς ἐπιδάξιν πολυμαθίας (τι γὰρ δὴ ἐστὶ το ταῦτα εἰδέναι;) ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν ὑποθεσιν ἡμιν συντελεῖ.

Argum. 1. Ep. Corinth. Vol. 3. P. 243. Ed. Eton.

culars which tell from the text.
But if any pious reader should still
lament the profane alliance which
some of them will exhibit with a
sacred subject, let him accept my
apology in the words of St. Chrysos-
tom:
There is pain in observing wicked customs, and these
things are to be avoided; (it is not to be seen;) alas
these are the things which are to be avoided.
Augustine, 1. Ep. CXXXIII. Vol. 3. P. 243. Ed. Fourn.
in a pastoral epistle, a most
detestable and rapid march from the
kitchen.

During the process of this ne-
cessary caution which has been in-
terposed, the notes have caught some parti-
culars

collective faculty, the importance of the power of the disposition, the interest of the object; and the faculty which is

DISCOURSE I.

at an universal one!—of a faculty which

is a faculty which is a faculty

If this is generally the case with respect to

things, of which the tendency is merely to

cial, and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

and if it is a faculty which is a faculty

DEUTERONOMY CH. XV. VER. XV.

**REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A BOND-
MAN IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THE
LORD THY GOD REDEEMED THEE.**

IT is peculiarly interesting to observe the manners and conduct of nations. If the contemplation of qualities unfolding the character of individual agents, can afford satisfaction to the philosopher; how must a

collective survey rise in importance! The power of the disquisition increases with the mass of its object; and the fancy which is pleased with a partial view, is astonished at an universal one!—

If this is generally true with respect to things, of which the tendency is merely social, and if states and kingdoms so strongly arrest the attention, though employing themselves on matters that do not exceed the bounds of human policy; what shall we say, if our minds are turned to the observation of a people, who, in addition to the usual arguments arising from this world, interest us with the more striking consequences of another; who affect themselves and others, not only by the ordinary tendency of actions as to the present life, but by all that may be supposed to allure or terrify through the countless ages of the life to come! whose measures, whether of wisdom or folly,

ly, are made to carry with them a supernatural influence; and whose faith and unbelief terminate not in the objects immediately presented to their choice, but extend their effects through a space that is unbounded, through a time that is infinite!

Need it be added that we speak of the Jews? Their history is so important, and in so peculiar a manner anticipates our own, that the Christian can never contemplate it with too much attention, or in too varied an aspect. We therefore invite you to follow us through certain parts of it, which the Deity seems to have intended as signs to the Israelites (* signs ill regarded) of his future intentions concerning the appearance of the

* This disregard of the Jew to the heavenly indications pursued him to the last, *οἱ δὲ καὶ* (says Josephus himself, of the warnings that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem) *τὸν σημεῖον ἃ μὲν ἐκείναι πρὸς ἡδονὴν, αὐτὰ δὲ ἐξεδέοντο.* De Bello Jud. Lib. 6. c. 5. § 4. Ed. Havercamp.

Messiah expected by that people. Some of these signs will, without doubt, be deemed to possess a meaning less obvious than other passages of scripture, expressly declaratory of the Saviour. It is on this account we have attached ourselves to the consideration of them; that the Old Testament may administer to the New, through all its channels, and that the remoter evidence may not be lost amid the blaze of the more immediate. For God sought to produce the obedience of his people by various methods, and would either seem to compel assent by the less evitable conviction of pointed prophecies, or to insinuate his views through the fainter medium of analogy. To the more gross of heart he addressed his dispensation with that openness of testimony which the case demanded; while the more refined spirits might strengthen their persuasion by the interpretation of indirect events. That both these classes refused to allow its proper

proper effect to either kind of evidence, is their crime*, and our astonishment. But since their conduct was such, let us consider what contrary conclusions they ought to have drawn from certain particulars of their previous history.

Not to insist on the smaller and collateral occurrences, (of which, however, some will necessarily arise in the progress of the narration) there are two, which we will more especially allot to our present meditation:

* It is to be remembered, that the first converts to Christianity were Jews, and that numbers of them at once became believers, Acts iv. 4. St. John xi. 45. But the present question is not of the individuals who received the faith; we speak of the general rejection of it by the Jewish nation. A similar remark must be afterwards applied to the Greeks. On this subject see Acts xvii. 4. xii. 34. and Dr. Jortin's "Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion," Disc. 1, 2. p. 90, 110. ed. 4.

we mean their Egyptian slavery (the pledge of captivities to be often repeated*) and their theocracy. Each of these dispensations ought to have prepared their minds for the reception of the Messiah in that character, which, in despite of reason and their own experience was so unacceptable to them: each ought to have persuaded them that they were never intended for a temporal dominion, but that it was a spiritual kingdom which heaven had been endeavouring to impress on their expectations from the beginning.

May it be allowed us to suppose, that the original mode of taking possession of the promised land by Abraham, indicated

* It was an early denunciation to them that their city should be frequently lost, *εν παξ, αλλα πολλαις*. Josephus Antiq. Jud. Lib. 4. c. 8. § 46. See this explained by the same author, De Bello Jud. Lib. 6. c. 10. *αλασα δε και προτερον πεντακις, τωτο δευτερον ηρημωθη.*

the

the future spirituality of its tenure? For we are told, that when the Lord appeared to him, and said, * "Unto thy seed will I give
 "this land, he built an altar there to the
 "Lord

* Gen. xii. 7. The Commentators suppose that Abraham offered sacrifice on this altar; though the patriarch is not represented as "calling on the name of the Lord," till he had removed to the "mountain on the east of Bethel," v. 8. nor is any sacrifice described till after his return from Egypt, c. xv. v. 9. Perhaps it was rather a sudden eucharistic altar, and, in purpose, resembled the pillar of Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 18. and the "sign of the twelve stones," erected by Joshua, Josh. iv. 3—9. According to Mede, *θυσιαστήριον* was but the distinctive term used by the Septuagint in the room of its Pagan equivalent, *βωμος*. And that the latter did not necessarily involve a material sacrifice, may be gathered from its derivation. See Leigh's *Critica Sacra* in voc. *βωμος*. But whether Abraham sacrificed on his altar, or not, the place, on which it had been built, was afterwards marked with peculiar veneration. See Patrick on Joshua xxiv. 25. We have also the opinion of St. Chrysostom as to the religious tendency of the patriarch's conduct, though he does not state it to have

“ Lord, who appeared unto him ;” the type, we presume, of that heavenly worship, for the sake of which their Canaan was first marked out to the chosen race. At all events, lest an undue opinion of his sudden inheritance should infuse any thing of worldly pride into the mind of Abraham, his vanity is instantly checked by the necessity laid upon

have proceeded to a material sacrifice. *Ορα Φιλοθεν γνωσης τεκμηριον· και ΑΤΤΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΤΟΠΙΟΝ, ενθα της ομιλιας ηξιωθη της παρα τη Θεω ΑΦΙΕΡΩΣΕ, και την ευχαριστιαν την κατε την δυναμιν επεδωξατο. Τετο γαρ εστιν, οικοδομησε θυσιαστηριον, αντι τω, ευχαρισησεν υπερ των επωγγελθεντων.* Vol. I. Λογ. λβ. p. 256. Ed. Eton. It is true, Josephus makes mention of a sacrifice, *βωμον οικοδομησε, και θυσιαν επετελεσε τη Θεω*, Antiq. Jud. Lib. i. c. 7. but its time is not particularised. It may have been (if it really took place) some other act of worship (and we have seen that there were more than one) performed by Abraham before his descent into Egypt. It is not necessarily the same of which we are speaking, namely, the first expression of his gratitude for the divine communication.

him

him of quitting his new possession. * “ There
 “ was a famine in the land, and Abraham
 “ went down into Egypt to sojourn there.”
 If he returns, it is but to renew the conse-
 cration of the land by the type of the altar,†
 and “ amidst an horror of great darkness,
 “ which fell upon him from the Lord,” to
 hear these terrible words, “ Know of a
 “ surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in
 “ a land that is not theirs, and shall serve
 “ them; and they shall afflict them four
 “ hundred years.” ‡

What

* Gen. xii. 10. This necessitous migration was but the prelude to that of the “ Syrian ready to perish.” It is observable that the yearly confession enjoined to the Israelites purposely recounts the misery of their forefathers. How different a sentiment from that of the Pagans, whose object it was to throw a veil of fictitious splendor over their original meanness, ut primordia urbium augustiora faciant ! Livy, Præf. Compare this with Deut. xxvi. 5.

† Gen. xiii. 4—18. ‡ Gen. xv. 12, 13. Well might St. Chrysostom exclaim, while he contemplated the

What are the sentiments to be suggested to the Israelite from the events which thus befel his ancestors? Were these the proper openings of a nation that was to be (what it would aspire to be) formed for temporal purposes, to be carried to their utmost splendor by an earthly Messiah? Was a spiritual dedication the appropriate index of a carnal authority, and was the initiation of a destined slavery the pledge of final and arbitrary conquest? No; the contrary intention of heaven was manifest from the earliest period of that people; and the Jews of our Saviour's time betrayed either grossness in not perceiving, or wilfulness in opposing it. To other nations it might have been permitted to work their way from meanness

nature of these words, Μεγάλα τα ερημένα, και Ψυχης νεανικης δεομενα και υπεραναβαινουσας και ΑΦΙΕΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΤΩ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΑ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΑ. α μη γαρ γενναιον τινα και ανδρεαν και φιλοσοφον εχε Ψυχην ο πατριαρχεις, ταυτα και δορυβησαι αυτον ικανα ην Vol. I. Δογ. λζ. P. 301.

to

to power, and to exchange original submission for subsequent empire.* The Jews alone had servitude prepared for them by the express arrangement of heaven, and variously modified in each successive step of their polity; nor must the accidental fortunes of the Gentiles be compared with the fate of a people exclusively doomed to temporal depression, that they might the better know to value their spiritual privileges.†

* Ελαχίσταις δὲ ἀφορμαῖς χροῖσθαι μὲν (scil. Philippus) μεγίστην τῶν κατὰ τὴν Εὐρωπικὴν δύνασιν κατασκευάσει τὴν ἰδίαν βασιλείαν, καὶ παραλαβὼν τὴν Μακεδονίαν ἀγλευσάν Ιλλυριοῖς, πολλὰν καὶ μεγάλαν ἐθνῶν καὶ πόλεων κυρίαν ἐποίησε. Diodor. Sicil. Hist. Lib. 16. p. 81. Vol. 2. Ed. Wesseling.

† Strabo could not but observe the peculiarity of the Jewish destination in the institutions of Moses, who, ἀντὶ τῶν ὁπλῶν, τὰ ἱερά προβαλλετο καὶ τὸ θεόν. Lib. 16. p. 523. Ed. Casaub. To other nations, religion was but subservient to arms; to the Jews it was their primary consideration.

See then this opinionated people, for whose expectations a spiritual Redeemer was not sufficient; this lofty race, whom nothing less than a temporal dominion could satisfy; see them, not while they triumph over their enemies, but while the Egyptians "make them to serve with rigour.*" Hear their cry, not of victory, but of despair, while "their lives are made bitter with hard "bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and "in all manner of hard service in the field!" Admirably adapted, no doubt, was the commencement of their nation to what they preposterously augured of its ultimate splendour; and sufficient reason had the enslaved descendants of their enslaved forefathers to believe themselves destined to political pre-eminence!

But shall the Israelites remain for ever thus abject, or shall they be delivered from

* Exod. i. 13, 14.

the opprobrium of Egyptian bondage? They shall be delivered. They shall leave the land of their oppressor with all the marks of a triumphant escape: they shall pass in safety the waves that overwhelm their pursuers; they shall reach the spot of their appointed settlement, drive out the possessors of it from before them, and finally establish themselves in their land of promise.

Is not here at length sufficient room for the Jews to presume on their martial capacity, on the certain, though tardy arrival of their temporal greatness? So far from it, that, as to any efficient exertion of their own power, their very deliverance ranks with their previous slavery, and the one, however different in appearance from the other, is but a part of it. Extraordinary people; on whom neither good nor evil maintains

maintains its proper influence, whose triumphs and whose submissions are the same, whose conquests are but continuations of their defeats! For by what means is their rescue effected? Was it "their own arm" that helped them? No: but it was "thy right hand, O God, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them."

Had they been attentive enough to observe the nature of the divine message to Pharaoh, laying the foundation of their escape from Egypt, they might have been persuaded of the true reason of their deliverance. For what were the grounds on which Moses was commanded to solicit their liberty? Not those of a temporal dominion, but of a spiritual service. "Let us go," says he, standing before Pharaoh with the

* Psalm xliv. 3. 4.

elders

elders of Israel, "That we may *sacrifice* to "the Lord our God."* The tendency of the original altar of Abraham is confirmed by the more express worship proposed by Moses: the consistency of the designs of heaven towards them is manifest, and, whether they leave Egypt, or settle in Canaan, the service of God is the object of each event, and effectually bars their desired dominion of man. The miracles that followed the unavailing remonstrance to Pharaoh, ought to have produced in the Jew a personal humiliation equal to the power that came to the relief of his own impotence; and the various plagues that fell upon the Egyptians, should have spoken as forcibly to his mind as the miseries which he had once suffered at their hands: the "pestilence, the thunder, and the lightning that

* Exod. iii. 18.

ran along upon the ground,"* might have taught him the same lesson which had been before impressed upon him by the "mortar, "the brick, and his hard service in the field." He could not pass the Red Sea, till God had given to the hand of Moses "a rod, "wherewith he should do signs."† He must have perished in the wilderness, had not God "filled him with bread from heaven",‡ and "turned the flint-stone into a springing "well"§ for his support. Deserted for a moment by his Almighty protector, he became the sure prey of his adversary, because God was not with him:¶ nor could he arrive at the land of his rest, unless the hand of Moses,¶ guided by an higher power, indicated his superiority over Amalek, who would have prevented his progress. So

* Exod. ix. 3. 23.

† Psalm cv. 39.

‡ Numbers xiv. 42

† Exod. iv. 17.

§ Psalm. cxiv. 8

¶ Exod. xvii. 10.

low,

low, as to personal prowess, was the Jew; so different from the kingdoms of the world was his own nation in the scale of temporal power. If he submits to his enemies, it is because their military acquirements are superior to his own: if he conquers, it is by miracle,* and he must have drawn an equal argument of humility from both events, were it not that prosperity, whatever be the cause of it, is less favourable to a true view of things than adversity: and that one defeat conveys a more faithful lesson than a multitude of triumphs.

We have now seen in what manner the first slavery of the Jews, with its attendant circumstances, ought to have affected their

* On another occasion, the Jew could enforce a similar lesson: *θεος ην ο ταυτα παρρασιν ημετεροις κρατηγων*, says Josephus, enumerating the miraculous deliverances of his nation. See his whole speech, *De Bello Jud.* Lib. 5. C. 9. § 3. 4.

minds; that it should have humbled their desires of a future temporal sovereignty, and prepared them for a spiritual Redeemer in the person of their Messiah.* We will now proceed to strengthen this conviction by the proposed consideration of their theocracy.

Had the Israelites ever been intended for such a dominion as that to which they aspired, they would have been indulged with

* We have endeavoured in the conduct of this argument to assist the refutation of Julian by St. Cyril; and the inferior prowess of the Jews, their slavery, and their peaceful confinement within the limits of Judea, have here it is hoped, a sufficient reason offered for them. The above objections to the Jewish economy may be seen. St. Cyr. contra Jul. Vol. 2. Lib. 5. p. 176. Juliani Opera, Lips. 1696. *Μολις μεχρι των της Ιουδαιας τερματων το μετρον αυτοις ωρισθαι της Βασιλευς.* And again in the triumphant challenge, *Ενα μα κατα Αλεξανδρον σδαζατε σρατηγον, ενα κατα Καισαρη, παρα τοις Εβραιοις &c. &c.* Lib. 7. p. 218.

it (whatever had been their former condition) when at length they obtained their settlement in the promised land. Then, if at any time, there might have been reason to hope for such a conformity between their natural and political condition; and, their expectations being gratified with the possession of a country “flowing with milk and “honey, which are the glory of all lands.”* they might equally have looked to the accomplishment of their wishes with respect to the object which they coveted with no less ardour, a worldly authority established in the person of a prince, who should “go “out before them, and fight their battles for

* Ezekiel xx. 6. These seem to have been the natural symbols of abundance to the imagination of all mankind. See the opening of the 47th Book of Dio Cassius for the use of one of these images indicating the pleasures awaiting the life of Anthony: τῇ δ' Ἀντωνίου γαλα τε περιεπερι το ταφρευμα περιρρευν, &c.

them.”

them.*" But on this part of the economy, Heaven, ever intending them for a different subjection, had observed a silence as cautious as their importunity would allow. If, meanwhile, it tempted their grossness with the alluring images of a plentiful land (without the influence of which they would have "returned into Egypt"†) its real purpose concerning them was of a purer nature, and a spiritual worship was aimed at through the veil of temporal good.‡

But in what manner are they at length governed? Instead of kings ruling with

* 1 Sam. viii. 20.

† Numbers xiv. 4.

‡ Credo equidem, says Spencer, vitam celestem Mosi innotuisse, eumque nonnulla statum futurum spectantia verbis mysticis et typorum nebulis involuta tradidisse. At certum est, legem Mosaicam nihil aperte et in summo verborum cortice, præter vitæ, quam in carne degimus, emolumentum, exhibuisse; et Hebræorum plebem, spe tantum aut sensu boni terrestris animatam, legi obedientiam præstitisse. De Leg. Heb. Rit. Vol. 1. L. 1. c. 4.

independent

independent sway, they have judges appointed over them, mere agents of the Supreme Will; the medium only, through which the Divine intentions are executed upon them. "The Lord raised them up judges, and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge."*

Such was the lesson impressed on their reluctance from the time of their settlement in the expected territory under Joshua. And in this state of political pupillage they are kept till the days of Samuel and his

* Judges ii. 18. Josephus does not give the name of Aristocracy to this form of government, says Spencer concerning the administration of Moses and the Elders, but purposely styles it a Theocracy, "*Quod illi vicarium tantum imperium gererent, et juxta Dei responsa vel præcepta rempublicam administrarent.* Theocr. Jud. Præf. The same description is afterwards applied to the Judges, c. 1. sect. 1.

sons.

sons. Here their unconquered spirit displays itself anew, and receives its chastisements in the midst of the gratification indulged to it. "Make us a king," say they, disdaining their proper polity, and coveting that of the Gentiles, "that we also may be like all the nations."* In vain does the prophet endeavour to dissuade them from this intention so incompatible with their other circumstances: in vain does he draw that terrifying picture † of their certain sufferings, if they persisted in the demand of a government originally denied to them by the arrangement of Heaven. Their cry is, "Nay, but we will have a king to rule over us."‡ At length, then, see them in possession of their wishes. They have a king: but a king in appearance only. Heaven is still their actual ruler. The name,

* 1 Sam. viii. 6, 20. † 1 Sam. viii. 11.

‡ 1 Sam. viii. 19.

indeed,

indeed, of the sovereignty is changed; but the sovereignty itself remains. Their new kings, as well as their past judges, are but secondary governors. They are appointed to their office by the choice of Heaven, expressly declared by the prophet of the Lord, and hold it till its forfeiture is again signified in the same manner.* The voice of Samuel betrays the subordinate authority of Saul, while he pours the vial of consecration on his head. "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"† As arbitrarily

* For the gradual diminution of the theocracy, see Spencer, Theoc. Jud. Lib. 1. c. 4. sect. 2. but, however obscured it gave a certain light down to the time of Christ. The great eclipse of the theocracy seems to have taken place under Solomon, when the throne, from being elective, became hereditary, the responses ceased to be given from the urim, and the ark, no longer attendant on their journeyings or warfare, was confined to the "holy of holies."

† 1 Sam. x. 1.

does

does it again mark the dissolution of that authority, in the tremendous declaration, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou."*

Thus held in effectual check by an ever-watchful theocracy, was the spirit of temporal dominion so fondly entertained by the Jews. The surrounding nations, having no peculiar destiny to fulfill, were at liberty to establish for themselves that form of

* 1 Sam. xv. 28. The theocracy of the Israelites, even under their later kings, is farther illustrated by the manner in which Elijah put to death the prophets of Baal, in opposition (as it should seem) to Ahab, who was present on the occasion, 1 Kings xviii. and also by the enquiry which Ahab makes of the prophet, 1 Kings xx. 14. who should order the battle, not presuming to take the command upon himself, till he had been particularly appointed to it by God.

government

government (if happily they might attain it) which nature and the welfare of society seem to have marked out, from the earliest times, as the point, from whence the principles of honour and rectitude delight to begin their career among mankind.* But the Jews, whose administration had been supernatural from the beginning, and to whom a worldly sovereignty was denied, because of the future appearance, in their own race, of

* Certainly it is not our wish to involve ourselves in any but Jewish politics. However, we cannot refrain from vindicating the sentiment of the text, by referring the reader to Polybius's Circle of Governments, *Αρχη ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ ΦΥΕΤΑΙ' ΚΑΙ ΤΟΤΕ ΠΡΩΤΩΣ ΕΝΝΟΙΑ ΥΙΓΝΕΤΑΙ ΤΗ ΚΑΛΩ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΚΑΙΩ ΤΑΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ*, &c. Relliq. Lib. 6. c. 5. Ed. Schweigh. Lips. 1789. The surrounding nations indeed were incapable of affording to the Jews any model of desirable royalty. But the caution of Moses sought to remedy the abuse of supreme power, common to the East, and would have brought down the Jewish sovereign to the wholesome limitations accepted by a legal king. Compare Deut. xvii. 14, &c. with Josephus, Antiq. Jud. Lib. iv. c. 8. sect. 17. *Παραχωρωτω δε υτος (scil. βασιλευς) τοις μεν νομοις*, &c.

Him whose "kingdom was not to be of this world,"* were to be governed in a different manner. They were the proper subjects of an invisible power;† and, by insisting on the ostensible authority of an independent throne, reasoned amiss on their very peculiar situation, and sacrificed at once their faith and their good sense. The vengeance of Heaven on this rebellious conduct was soon displayed among them: the theocratic guidance was gradually diminished, and, after a certain display of an inefficient sovereignty, the forbidden kings and their misguided people were carried to-

* St. John xviii. 36.

† Spencer calls the Israelites, *Regis solius supremi subditos*, Theoc. Jud. Lib. 1. c. 1. sect. 3. and thus accounts for their crime in desiring a change of government. *Regem petentes graviter peccarunt, & Deum vehementer offensum reddiderunt, non quod imperium regium, simpliciter spectatum, ei displiceret, sed quod imperium regium, dura licet servitute redemptum, regimini suo æquo lenique præferendum existimarent*, Lib. 1. c. 4. sect. 3.

gether into captivity. Israel first fell; divided Judah soon followed; and both were condemned to the same punishment for their common crimes.*

We have now stated what was proposed for our present meditation. The earliest periods of the Jewish history look forward to the spiritual character of Him who came "the King of the Jews;" and Heaven would have conveyed to that people, by numberless indications, that their Messiah should one day appear in the manner which at length did actually distinguish him. Some of these indications (taking the collateral

* Regni ruina inter tristes mutati regiminis eventus numerari debet. Nam post paucos annos, tota natio in duas factiones secessit, bellis frequentibus se mutuo atterentes, donec pars utraque tandem regibus ethnicis in prædam caderet. Captivitatibus pressi sunt luctuosis Israelitæ, quas nunquam experti fuissent, si a summo suo rege & domino non descivissent. Theoc. Jud. c. 4. sect. 3.

and the primary ones together) were, as we have seen, the original consecration of their land to spiritual purposes, the prediction of their Egyptian slavery, crushing their temporal dominion in its very cradle, the rigorous execution of that prediction, their rescue from slavery, by power not their own, and their final government, either by judges wanting the splendor of kings, or by kings, who, in fact, were nothing more than vice-roys.

These we conceive to be so many arguments against the temporal dominion of Christ. But if the inference to be drawn from them is already so strong, we will, in the next Discourse endeavour to enforce it by some additional observations arising, indeed, for the most part, from a different quarter, but not less propitious to the purpose which we have in view.

(174)

DISCOURSE II.

DEUTERONOMY, CH. vii. VER. 6.

—THOU ART AN HOLY PEOPLE UNTO
THE LORD THY GOD.

IN the preceding Discourse, we endeavoured to point out some of the less obvious reasons that might have persuaded the Jews to the acceptance of Christ, from the peculiar nature of their political condition. Leaving the usual tract of proof, nor urging

ing afresh the direct authority of prophecies accomplished, we entered into the more remote deductions to be drawn from certain important parts of their history, and sought to strengthen the acknowledged force of more express testimony, by the auxiliary conclusions of analogy. In short, we endeavoured to shew, that, from their perpetual want of national consequence, they ought to have expected in their Saviour, the very character with which he finally came; that they must have been convinced (had they reasoned rightly on the peculiarity of their situation) that his kingdom would necessarily be, not of this world, but of another.

If we should appear to have had any success in establishing that argument, we will now endeavour to strengthen the conviction which it affords, by one drawn from a different source, but of a tendency precisely the

the same. If we then reasoned from the ignominy of their politics, we will now proceed to argue from the ascendancy of their religion. Each of these arguments will equally contribute to the cause which we mean to support. Their abasement in one condition will be explained by their exaltation in another: their political humility will coalesce, in purpose, with their religious superiority; and on both sides, the anticipation of a spiritual dominion in the Messiah will necessarily appear; uninterrupted temporal degradation* cutting off all reason-

* Perhaps this may seem too strong an expression, and liable to be contradicted, both by the duration (not an unimportant one) of the regal government of Israel and Judah, and by certain subsequent displays of national power. Julian, who must have wished to prove their perpetual servitude, has yet confessed, that *επαδη εβασιλευθησαν, ψηησαν γυν την εαυτων, και εγεωργησαν, ολιγα προς τετρακχοσιοις ετεσιν*. St. Cyr. contra Jul. Lib. 6. p.

reasonable hope of a future worldly supremacy; and a system exclusively religious, prescribed

210. And Justin has allowed them, at a later period, exertions in war productive of a state of independence. Quorum vires tantæ fuere, says he, ut post hunc (Antiochum) nullum Macedonum regem tulerint, domesticque imperiis usi, Syriam magnis bellis infestaverint. Lib. 36. c. 1. But their independence was apparent only. The theocracy (of which neither of these writers dreamt) was still, in a certain degree, continued over them: the kings were liable to the ever-recurring controul of the prophets of the Lord; and the captivities (whether to Babylon or Rome) which by the Divine appointment, followed those periods of fancied empire, evinced a subjection (not yet done away) to an extraneous and superior administration. For a chronological difference as to the duration of the regal government of the Jews, compare Josephus Antiq. Jud. L. 10. c. 8. §. 4. with Lactantius L. 4. c. 5. What a strange notion of Diodorus Siculus (who had bestowed so much attention on the affairs of that people) that the Jews never had a king! ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ, ΜΕΝ, ΜΗΔΕΠΟΤΕ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ ΓΕΝΕΘΑΙ. Eclog. Lib. 40. The same thought occurs in Dio Cassius,

prescribed to them from the beginning, equally pointing out the nature of its continuation under the remaining conduct of Heaven towards them; equally determining the peculiar sense in which they ought to have interpreted the title, to them so ambiguous, of "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

sius, who, confounding the earlier with the later government of the Jews, merges the whole of their sovereignty in a *priesthood*. *εγω γαρ την Βασιλειαν σφων ωναμαζον.*

Lib. 37. c. 15. p. 121. Vol. 1. Ed. Reimar. Justin expresses the same error in a still stronger manner.

Semper exinde (that is, from the royal priesthood of his *Arnas*, the son of Moses, (he means Aaron) *hic mos apud Judæos fuit, ut eosdem reges et sacerdotes haberent; quorum justitia religione permixta, incredibile quantum coaluere!*

Lib. 36. c. 2. On the contrary, the object had ever been to keep these functions separate; the priesthood was given to the seed of Aaron exclusively, *ετεροι δε τις γενος εδ' αν Βασιλευς ων τυχη τευξασθαι της ιερωσυνης.* The first exception to this rule, was in the person of Aristobulus. Josephus Antiq. Jud. Lib. 20. c. 10.

It is vain to argue (as the erring fondness of the Jews would lead them) from certain expressions employed in their first call, and from some subsequent instructions concerning their conduct in the land of promise, to the great temporal structure which they would fain erect on the foundation of those passages. All reasoning on this subject might be prevented at once, by stating the fact which we have already proved, that, instead of the worldly supremacy to which they aspired, they were perpetually afflicted with worldly depression; that not only were they not like the objects of their unceasing envy, the surrounding monarchies, but were always subjected to their dominion; or, if preserved from it, preserved by means equally declaratory of their own weakness: and when, by the establishment of a similar polity, they wished to rival the power of the Gentile kings, such an independence was denied to them; and from
the

the secondary authority of their governors (by whatever names they might be called) their incapacity for absolute rule was unequivocally exposed. But we may add, that the general spirit pervading the representation of the economy of that people, militates too strongly against the particular construction in question, and the evidence for the religious nature of their establishment, remains in full force, notwithstanding the occasional and indispensable mention of a worldly authority. To their inheritance indeed, they were to be introduced amid the appearance of temporal power. This was inevitable, on account of the necessary concurrence of human agency with the mixed plan of Providence. But the heritage once acquired, the temporal power was restrained by an immediate boundary,* and the land of their rest† (as

* See Patrick on Gen. xv. 18.

† Deut. xii. 9. 10.

it was emphatically termed) was to afford them a cessation, not only from past slavery, but from future triumph.* In a word, the mention of their worldly authority, is directly the reverse of the statement of their religious obedience. The one is scanty and reluctant, the other full and voluntary; the former checked in the very moment of expression, the latter enforced with all the anxiety of command, shewing itself in "line upon line, precept upon precept."†

But there is a more particular manner of vindicating the point in question.

* *Bella nulla geri voluit (Deus) e pruritu dominandi*, says Spencer. Theoc. Jud. c. 3. And Josephus makes the dying Moses utter this wish: ἀπολεμον νεμοισθε κελημενοι αυτην (scil. γην) μητε αλγοτριων, &c. &c. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 4. c. 8. §. 41.

† Isaiah xxviii. 13.

Prophetic

Prophetic regulations are essentially different from secular institutions. Man, looking forward but a little, selects what things he deems the best out of those that are least remote: and that which he prescribes is meant by him as positively eligible. But God, who, seeing beyond the present scene of things, knows the entire train of human events, authorises certain appointments, which, did not the waywardness of generations to come demand them from his providence, he would not have permitted. Aware that the passions of its creatures will, in their progress, produce particular consequences, Heaven takes up the consequences themselves before they arrive, and indulges by this moral anticipation, what, considered apart from such necessity, it would have prevented.

Such is the difference between the prescience of God and the ignorance of man;
a dif-

a difference, which alone can explain, with any satisfaction, those passages relating to the Jewish polity, that would otherwise appear contradictory and inexplicable: which reconciles the promise to Abraham, "Kings shall come out of thee,"* with the complaint, "They have rejected me that I should not reign over them;† which makes the regulations concerning the con-

* Gen. xvii. 6.

† 1 Sam. viii. 7. The opinion of Grotius on the subject of the Jewish Kings, seems to be erroneous. On Deut. xvii. 14. (see the next note) he scruples not to say, *Licet ergo ipsis (Israelitis) regem expetere, sed non quo tempore interregem habebant a Deo constitutum.* Pole's Synopsis contains a better interpretation of the passage. *Vaticinium hoc est*—which just idea is thus explained in another place, the verse before that quoted in the text, *Non mandavit Deus creari regem, sed prædixit eos velle regem expetere.* See Grotius again on Judges viii. 23. and on Gen. xvii. 6. where a proud list is indulged of Kings springing from Abraham's loins.

quest

quest of places beyond the limits of the promised land* intelligible, together with the condition of resting from all future war when once possessed of it.† Had the Jew reasoned in this manner, he would have exhibited at once a better comprehension of his law, and a docility of temper ensuring to himself the continuance of the divine favour. But either his dulness, or his supposed interest prevented him. Either he could not perceive the distinction so easy to be

* The regulations of Moses concerning the forbidden Kings, occur Deut. xvii. 14. 15. A law, conceived in a similar spirit, respecting the "altar of stone," is given, Exod. xx. 25. Compare this with the chapter "De lege altare terreum statuente," Spencer De Leg. Heb. Rit. Lib. 2. c. 5. If the reader will not resent a reference to rather a vulgar illustration of this extorted permission, he may see it in St. Chrysostom. Vol. 6. *κατα Ιερουσαλ.* Δογ. α. p. 318. *Και καθαρὰν λατρεν, &c.* 2 *

† Deut. iii. 20. Joshua i. 13. 15.

made,

made, or, perceiving it, would still disregard it, and obstinately dwell on the possessions of this world, in preference to those glorious prospects that would have opened upon him from another.

But to pass from these fainter appearances of reasoning, to the more convincing facts afforded us in their history:

These will be of two sorts: the first consisting of religious institutions in the abstract: the second exhibiting the connection of religion with their politics, and the invariable superiority of the former.

The examples presented to us from every quarter of the Jewish history in favour of

* Spencer attributes his wayward conduct, in the demand of a king, to the want of a right comprehension of his law. *Verba legis perperam intellecta*. Theoc. Jud. c. 4. sect. 3.

the first part of our argument, are so numerous and striking, that the difficulty is, not to find, but to select. The original call of that people in the person of Abraham, (confessedly meant as the preservative of a certain race from an otherwise universal idolatry*) stamps the future character of their establishment, and as evidently defines them to religious pre-eminence, as did the slavery, which followed it, to temporal subjection. And, indeed, what was

* See Patrick on Gen. xi. 31. Maimonides, besides his particular testimony to the anti-idolatrous tendency of Abraham's circumcision, Patrick on Gen. xvii. 7. said of the entire law of Moses, *Manifestam habent utilitatem omnia legis præcepta & interdicta, idololatriam & quicquid illi adhæret, ad eam permovet, aut pertinet, prohibentia.* Spencer, *De Leg. Heb. Rit. Lib. i. c. i. sect. 2.* The mysticism of Philo Judæus on the terms employed in the call of Abraham, Gen. xii. 1. may be worth observing, *Τὴν μὲν γὰρ "γῆν," σωματος, τὴν δὲ "σύγγενεαν," αἰσθησεως, τὸν δὲ "τὸ παῖρος οἶκον," λόγῳ συμβολὸν εἶναι συμβέβηκε.* *Περὶ ἀποικίας, Vol. i. p. 436. Ed. Mangey.*

the object of the law, presented to them at a later period, but a revival and extension of the effect intended by the first compact of circumcision? What was so anxiously enforced upon them, as the declaration that "God would establish his covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan?"*

But what was its obvious and declared meaning? And how did this renewal of the Divine intentions towards the otherwise afflicted Israelites explain itself in their progress to the promised inheritance? A covenant must have two parts; and if Jehovah gives the Jews a country, he must be understood to require something of them in return. This obligation is purely religious: "Thou shalt keep, therefore, his statutes and his commandments, that it may go well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God

* Exod. vi. 4—8. See their sense of this covenant in its renewal, Nehemiah x. 29, &c.

"giveth

" giveth thee."* Previous protection is entitled to subsequent gratitude; and that gratitude is entirely denoted to be of a pious nature; to display itself, not in acts of carnal authority, but of spiritual worship; not to affect the sovereignty of man, but to perform the will of God.

This peculiar destination of the Jews strikes us again in the account of the appearance of God to Moses in the burning bush.† In this solemnity, the token promised to him that the people under his guidance, should really find the deliverance of which he had despaired, was drawn from no image of worldly splendor; it resulted neither

* Deut. iv. 40. Compare this with the reciprocal terms of the covenant made with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 8, 9. See the effect of the violation of it, Nehemiah ix. 26, 27, &c.

† Exod. iii. 2, 12. See the fancies of Philo concerning this bush, Συμβολον γαρ ο καιομενος βατ^ο, &c. De Vita Mosi, Vol. 2. Lib. 1. p. 91, 92.

from a battle won, nor from a throne established; but it was a token characteristically religious. "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." Events, which, to any other nation, would have been nothing more than casual and secular, suddenly drop their wonted nature in behalf of the Jew, and evince his spiritual destiny. His escape from Egypt affords the reason of his entrance into Canaan; and the possession of his hope is stamped with the character of his deliverance from misery.

But we are in danger of dwelling too long on what must be already evident. Therefore we will not expatiate on the celestial Majesty which invested mount Sinai*, on the nature of these precepts that descended from it; precepts, having no affinity with the worldly ambition which they en-

* Exod. xix. 16.

tertained,

tertained, but leading the hearers to a two-fold duty towards heaven and earth.* We will be equally brief in noticing the preparations for a visible emblem of the divine presence to be established among them, the building of the tabernacle under the especial direction of heaven,† the sanctification of Aaron and his sons to its service,‡ the subsequent dedication of the entire tribe of Levi,§ with the descent of the glory of the Lord on the house which he had established among his chosen people,|| the growing pomp which attends the ark under the care of David,¶ and the completion of his piety

* Κρατίστον μὲν ἀκαλίῳ εἶναι φησι τὴν εἰς θεοῦ εὐσεβειάν—
ἔτα μετὰ τὸ τοῦ παντὸς ὁδοῦ ἀποφασκεῖν φαυλότητος, καὶ τῆς
τῆς ἀνοσιότητος κατακτείνουσα τροπῆς. St. Cyr. contra
Jul. Lib. 5 p. 153.

† Exod. xxxv. 11.

‡ Exod. xl. 13.

§ Numbers iv. 2.

|| Numbers ix. 5.

¶ 1 Chron. xv. 6.

bas

in

in the magnificent temple of Solomon.* All these are shining and incontrovertible marks of the superior account in which religion was intended to be held by them;†

* 1 Chron. v. 1. That the unexampled magnificence of the temple flowed from no motive of worldly ambition, but was due to religion alone, may be seen in Spencer De Leg. Heb. Rit. vol. 2. l. 3. c. 2. diff. 6. It was so built, says he, *Ut rudis Hebræorum populus (qui de rebus ex aspectu judicavit) excellentem summi Dei majestatem ex ipsa templi magnificentia æstimaret, et Deus cultusque Israelis tot saltem parasangis Gentilium numina et sacra, quot et templum ejus eorum delubra anteire videretur.*

† How strongly the Heathen writers represent the religious cast of the Jews! *Τῶν μὲν ἄλλων θεῶν οὐδὲν τιμῶσιν,* says Dio Cassius, *ἐνὰ δὲ τινὰ ἰσχυρῶς σεβῶσιν. οὐδ' ἀγαλλμα οὐδὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς ποτὲ ἱεροσολυμοῖς εἶχον· ἀρρητὸν δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀσὶν αὐτὸν νομίζοντες εἶναι, περισσοτάτα ἀνθρώπων θρησκευσι.* Vol. 1. Lib. 37. c. 17. p. 122. And Tacitus thus expresses himself concerning them, *Judæi mente sola, unumque numen intelligunt. Profanos, qui Deum imagines, mortalibus materiis, in species hominum effingant, Summum illud et eternum, neque mutabile, neque interiturum,* Hist. Lib. 5. c. 5. Wonderful that these writers were not struck with awe at the sublimity of their own words!

and

and having been originally chosen, and afterwards protected for this essential purpose, they had every reason to look forward to an appropriate continuance of their condition; and, on this ground, as well as the other of their deficiency in political importance, to have expected in Christ, not a temporal, but a more characteristic, a spiritual Redeemer.

These, indeed, which we have just enumerated, are positive and express institutions, directly enjoined and less mingled with the other events of their history. But in those cases too, where their temporal and spiritual concerns are blended, it is equally easy to detach the one from the other, and to point out, as we proposed in the second place, the constant predominance of the divine part over the human,

In

In the wilderness of Sinai, soon after their escape from the land of Egypt, the people of Israel, in pursuance of the Divine command, are numbered and arranged in martial order according to their tribes.* But was the true purpose of this muster a military one? To prove the contrary, it would be sufficient to say, that their warfare, taken in its general sense, was but the medium through which the establishment of a purer worship than had hitherto obtained, was to be effected in the promised land. But there is an interior reason for this display of arms; for the especial object of the arrangement was the guardianship of the newly erected tabernacle.† The numbering of the people by David, at another time and without this religious

* Numbers i. 1. † Numbers i. 50. ii. 17. Quid autem Moses Israelitas eo quem dixi ordine collocari, voluit, nisi ut omnia, ad usitatum castrametationis modulum

ligious necessity, was attended with very different consequences, and the pestilence avenged the causeless indulgence of military pride.* Their progress towards the enemy, in another place, received its immediate punishment, unsanctioned as it was, by their usual safeguard, the "ark of the covenant of the Lord!"—"The Amalekites smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."† The same suppre-

lum conformata, Dei loco et potestate imperatorie magis convenirent? Spencer, Theoc. Jud. c. 5. sect. 3. The learned author seems himself aware of being more fanciful than usual in his examination of the threefold sovereignty exercised by Jehovah over the Jews. He regards the tabernacle as erected to him in his political character, of king, employed in holy service to him as God, and carried with the armies of Israel for him as Lord of Hosts. In short, it was at once a palace, a temple, and a prætorian tent.—The classical attachment of the writer is every where busy; and now and then the Jewish Jehovah becomes unawares the Pagan Jupiter.

* 1 Chron. xxi. 2.

† Numb. xiv. 44.

macy of the ark over all attendant circumstances, is farther seen in its temporary capture permitted on account of the relapse of the chosen race into idolatry.* The affliction of Israel is not for the victory, but for the ark, won by the Philistines. It is the only pledge of their establishment; and, if they regain it, it is because their enemies are miraculously affected, and compelled by Heaven to restore it.† Again, they reach the Jordan in military array: but is it by military contrivance that the river is forded? No: the passage is effected by the attendant holiness of the ark,‡ and what is denied to their prowess, is granted to their religion.

These instances may perhaps suffice for the establishment of our second position.

* 1 Sam. iv. 11.

† 1 Sam. v. 11. See some curious circumstances attending the restoration of the ark, mentioned by Josephus. De Bello Jud. Lib. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.

‡ Joshua 3. 15.

But

But let us not dismiss the subject without one observation more.

Had the Jews been sufficiently curious to mark the peculiar manner in which their history was conducted, they might have learnt to appreciate the alternate agencies of which it was made to consist: not to blend in one undistinguishing view, its spiritual and secular parts, but to detach the miraculous assistance from the operation of the natural arm, and attribute to each its just effect. The celestial support, truly afforded to them is described in a manner convincingly different from that of the fabled aid lent by the Pagan superstition to its votaries. When the auxiliar deities of the latter are represented as descending and fighting on their side, the effect on their minds (whatever were their views on other accounts, in the acknowledgment of a supernatural service) might yet be a real persuasion that it

was to their own prowess they were indebted for victory. For here the feigned assistance exactly corresponds with the previous efforts of him who is relieved by it. The attendant Deity assumes the same attitude with the engaged mortal: man wields his sword; his God is described as doing the same: the actions are perfectly alike; the auxiliary arm becomes homogeneous with the principal, and the secondary exertion is not sufficiently distinguishable from the primary*. Hence the natural blending of both agencies into one: and the vanity of the human being may be well supposed to swallow up in itself the accordant aid of the immortal.

* If we had no such circumstantial belief of the actual conflicts of the Pagan Gods, as we see in Justin, Lib. 20. c. 3. and Florus Lib. 1. c. 11. it might be inferred perhaps from the antient adoration of *spears* for *deities*.

Let

Let us try the victories of the Jews by this test, and see how different a conclusion is to be drawn from the comparison. The assistance conveyed to them, is essentially distinct from any exertions of their own, from any display of natural power. It is at once impotent and efficient: it seems without virtue, but is omnipotent. The extended rod of Moses,* producing the overthrow of Pharaoh, has no answerable appearance of force, possesses no affinity with the known instruments of destruction. Its nature will assimilate neither with that of an exterminating sword, nor an overwhelming wave; and the relief conveyed by it is of a kind entirely its own: it stands for ever aloof from the efforts of man, nor can any but Jewish inattention slumber into a con-

* Compare the characteristick manner in which the Red Sea is divided, with the general and unimpressive fiction of the self-separated Numicius. Silius Italicus, Lib. 8. 196 &c. and Ovid Fast. Lib. 3. p. 652.

fusion of its peculiar properties with any common agency.

Let us apply the same reasoning to their subsequent victories. In the battle so characteristically described, between Amalek and Israel, by what means is the former subdued? Moses, who stands on a hill at a distance, holds up his hands!—These hands have an employment apparently innoxious, and absolutely dissimilar from that of the hands engaged in the valley; and the support which they bring (standing thus apart from any human means of conveying assistance) is to be had in perpetual remembrance, the *mode* of exhibiting it being not less strange than the relief itself.†

These

* Exod. xvii. 11, &c.

† This distinction of the Mosaic miracles, this unexpected mode of displaying a supernatural assistance, we would urge as an internal proof of their authenticity.

These examples, it is hoped will be sufficient to establish our argument, that the Jew

The same difference may be observed, in other instances, between the divine records and the fancies of man. When Moses demands from God certain assurance that he should be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt, his rod becomes a serpent, and a rod again, and his hand is suddenly leprous and as suddenly whole, *Exod. iv. 3. 6.* Compare these with the two signs which Homer sends from Jupiter for the conviction of Ulysses, *Odyss. Lib. 20. v. 100, &c.* In the former the signs are appropriate; they are absolutely beyond the line of natural experience, and therefore well announce celestial aid. The same cannot be said of "thunder heard at a distance, and the voice of a woman employed at the mill." Compare with this view the satisfying of Gideon by the fleece of wool alternately wet and dry. *Judges. vi. 3.* To the above signs indulged to Moses, there is another added by Josephus. *κελευθας δε και τα πλησιον υδατος λαβων επι την γην εκ χειρος, ορα την χροαν αιματωδη γενομενην. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 2. c. 12. sect. 3.* But this seems unnecessary for his conviction, as it has not the double action of the preceding prodigies. Philo Judæus mentions this third sign, and allows it to have been of a striking nature; but be-

fides

Jew was impelled on all sides to look on himself as a creature intended for piety, not for empire: and therefore, that he should have expected a spiritual, in preference to a temporal, Messiah. To this conclusion we have led him both by the perpetual depression of his worldly consequence, wearing his affection from earthly things,* and by the constant ascendancy of religion through the whole of his history; and that, not only in the positive institutions of it, but in its concurrence with his secular concerns; sides its being, according to his statement, no more than a promised sign (in opposition to the account of Josephus, who represents it as actually experienced by Moses) he hints at its wanting a characteristick propriety possessed by the other two. These, says he, had been fulfilled on what were the perpetual accompaniments of Moses; his rod and right hand were the never-failing memorials of the will of Heaven. *τρίτον δε επιφερεσθαι μιν εν ην,* &c. *De Vita Mosi. Lib. 1: p. 93. Vol. 2.* The scriptures hold out this sign, not for the conviction of Moses, but that of the Egyptians, see Exod. iv. 9. & vii 17.

* Discourse I.

where

where the natural is combined for him with the supernatural, and where the Divine aid comes in to relieve, in a manner new and peculiar, the insufficiency of his own arm.

If we had not already so much proof in our hands, what additional conviction might not be offered us by the contemplation of the superiority of the religion over the polity of the Jews, in point of duration as well as of importance ; by a view of the two institutions, not only while they subsisted together, but while one failed, and the other continued to prosper !* Their secular establishment was interrupted, and they were carried into captivity : but the better characteristics of religion were preserved to them,

* It is observable, that, after the restoration of their public worship by the building of the temple under Darius, they were obliged to pray for the life, and consequently for the continuance of the political power, of the Gentile family which held them in subjection. Ezra, vi. 10.

and the voice of prophecy was still heard from amid the bonds of their slavery,—prophecy looking forward to an ill understood, but glorious futurity, and, in its anticipation of a spiritual Saviour, teaching them (had they but ears to hear) that kingdoms are as nothing, that power melts away, but that the “**grace of God through Jesus Christ endureth for ever.**”

DIS.

DISCOURSE III.

ST. LUKE, CH. XII. VER. 14.

**—WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO
REIGN OVER US.**

WE have seen what were the reasons arising both from the political and religious condition of the Jews, to prepare them for the true character in which their Messiah should at length appear. From the singular depression that had marked the one, they

might have reasoned to its future destiny; might have learned to acquiesce in the subordination of its design, and banished the unreasonable hope of final splendor, setting an incongruous crown on the head of habitual meanness. Again, from the perpetual ascendancy enjoyed by the other, they might equally have concluded, that it was entitled to the privilege of being continued in the same line of comparative superiority. Nay, as progressive amelioration * from the corruptions of original idolatry, had been the constant object of their religion, they ought to have expected, that, in process of time, whatever perfection of worship might be still in reserve for the world, would be indulged, by preference, to their own nation, so long the depository of the divine communications, while the "heathen had no knowledge of God's

* Ολον αναβιβάζων κατὰ βραχὺ πρὸς τὸ ἀπώλητον ἔχον, says St. Cyril of God's gradual purification of their minds by revealed religion, St. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 9. p. 308.

"laws."

"laws."* This inference we find to be warranted by the history of Christ's mission. They were the people to whom, by the choice of Heaven, and in conformity with their ancient experience, he was sent with the last and most complete revelation which the world was destined to receive; nor were the rest of mankind to partake of its privileges, (since they had never been the objects of the antecedent revelations) till the Jews had rejected their proper Gospel, and, by that rejection, given room for the admission of the hitherto excluded Gentile. Salvation came "to the Jew first," says the apostle, "and also to the Greek."†

We might now proceed to consider at large the causes from which this rejection may be thought to have sprung. But, as it is not our purpose to enumerate the many that

* Psalm cxlvii. 20.

† Romans i. 16.

have

have been adduced,* we will select some one of them, which, from its leading influence in this determination, may be allowed to represent the rest.

Shall we say, that it was the extraordinary wickedness of the Jews, which produced the dire effect, and that the purity of the Gospel was too hostile to the prevailing iniquity to have any probable chance of success?† Or, if this be thought incompetent, shall we adopt another notion, and suppose that the Jewish people would not have remained thus unbelieving, but that the influence of their rulers occasioned the refusal; and Christianity suffered, that those who

* A catalogue of them is given by Dr. Jortin, in his "Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion." Consult also Bishop Kidder's "Demonstration of the Messiah," Vol. 2, c. 1. &c. for a number of the Jewish objections to the Gospel, and their refutation.

† Dr. Jortin's Disc. i. p. 3.

possessed the ascendancy in the state, might retain the advantage of their superior stations? We will not enter into a discussion of either of these causes, but will build our discourse on another, more characteristick than the first, more universal than the second. We mean to be understood of a fatal and preconceived notion of a temporal sovereignty, falsely interpreted by the Jews from their scriptures.

The prophets, in their anticipations of the coming of Christ, pouring forth, from the fullness of inspiration, all the circumstances attendant on his mission, whether they were splendid or humiliating, whether they belonged to this world or the next,† had represented him at one time as triumphant, at another as suffering; now exalted;

* Tillotson, Sermon 63. Dr. Jortin. Disc. i p. 35.

† Louth on Isaiah liii and liv. Vitringa on the same, and on c. liv. 13. &c.

now depressed; alternately a king and a victim. Under these opposite aspects, they meant to view his double situation, as God, as man, the heavenly author of a spiritual and everlasting dominion, yet ingloriously dying in the flesh for its establishment. But this was a purpose too pure and recondite for the grossness of the Jew, whose mind was more affected by the literal expressions than the interior meaning, and for whom the temporal images had always more charms than the spiritual. What then was the probable issue of his deliberation? A conversion of the complicate description to the purposes of his pride. The meaner and more disastrous parts of it, he threw away, or, at least explained in a sense that should not invade the great object of his affections;* the rest he interpreted on the more ambitious

* The fancy of some later Jews, may be a clue to what their perverseness will at all times have attempted.

See

ambitious side, anxiously substituting the prosperity of earth for the happiness of Heaven. This fatal expectation he transmitted to his children, till the length of time that intervened between his first prophet and his Messiah, had formed in his heart a mass of worldly persuasion which no subsequent spirituality could remove. Dull in his apprehension, obstinate in his disposition,* the Jew was ill calculated to correct the uninterrupted error of ages, for the sake of any reasons, however powerful, suddenly impelling him to the truth; nor was the short

See the strange superstition of two Christs, the first unfortunate, the second glorious, one the son of Joseph, the other the son of David. Kidder's "Demonstration", &c. Vol. i. c. 7.

* These qualities are not fixed on the Jew at random; they are charged to him by the fidelity of a Jewish hand, though on a different occasion. *Ανοητον το πλθος*, says Josephus, *και δυσκολον εξελαν της διανοιας κρισιν ηδη τατα το λογισμω καθιδρυμενην*. Antiq. Jud. Lib. 6. c. 3. sect. 6.

life of his Saviour upon earth able to root out the prejudice of fifteen centuries begun in his heart from the time of Moses. Here then was his stumbling-block; and he had to plead the venerable age of his mistake, in addition to the weight which it originally possessed from too successful an appeal to one of the strongest of human passions.*

In order to be convinced, that this temporal prejudice was the leading cause of his

Moses, under whom the Jews had triumphed, and were led to the possession of their promised country, had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of thy brethren: him shall ye hear." Deut. 18. 15. Julian, who, rather than not confound the Christian, would argue on the side of the Jew, makes much use of this passage: Το γαρ, says he, ου ηρται περι τε γεννηθεντος εν Μαρια. Ει δε τις, υμων ενος, συζητησμεν, εαυτω φησιν αυτον ομοιον γενησεσθαι, και ο το δεσ. St. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 8. p. 253. For the true and circumstantial interpretation of this resemblance, see Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History. Vol. 1. p. 132, &c. Ed. 2.

rejection

rejection of the Gospel, let us take a view of it, not only at the time of Christ's appearance, but in the earlier periods of the Jewish history. If we can find any striking specimens of the same character, previously to the exertion of its influence against the person of his Saviour, we may rest on it, as a sure principle of his conduct at all times: we may be persuaded of the true motive of his last opposition, by the pledges of rebellion, which, from the first, he will be seen to display. We will select from the Old Testament two instances which may stand as the prognostics of what would be his future behaviour towards the new. The one will represent him amid the pride of worldly exaltation, the other, under the chagrin of worldly debasement.

See him then, while he is about to fulfill the ungrateful project of a temporal sovereignty. When his desire of a Gentile form

of government, has at length extorted the reluctant acquiescence of Heaven, what are the tokens, by which it is necessary to distinguish their new king, ere he obtain the submission of his subjects?—Tokens which had no place in “Jesus of Nazareth.” Saul is described, as descended from the “Benjaminite, a mighty man of power.”* They who were swayed by so worldly a prejudice as this, how should they learn to reverence him whom they insultingly called the “Carpenter, the son of Mary?”† Saul is represented as a “choice young man, and a goodly; and there was not among the children “of Israel, a goodlier person than he‡” Samuel is constrained to point him out to them

* 1. Sam. ix. 1.

† St. Mark. vi. 3.

‡ 1 Sam. ix. 2. Josephus says of him, *ην δε νεανιας την μορphen αριστος, και το σωμα μεγας, &c.* as he had said of Cis, that he was *ευ γεγονως, &c.* He characteristically adds concerning Saul, when he was found and presented to the people, *εξαχε δ' αυτων απαντων και το υψιστον βασιλικωτατος.* Antiq. Jud. Lib. 6. c. 4. sect. 1. under

under that character, " See ye him, whom
 " the Lord hath chosen, that there is none
 " like him among all the people?"* Nor
 was it till this personal advantage was insist-
 ed upon, that they confirmed by acclama-
 tion the choice of the prophet : it was only
 when they saw a sovereign, whose figure ex-
 celled their own, that " all the people shout-
 ed, and said, God save the King."† Com-
 pare this with the opposite prophecy con-
 cerning Jesus. " He hath no form nor
 " comeliness; and when we shall see him,
 " there is no beauty, that we should desire
 " him."‡ View the two kings together,
 and judge if the acceptance of the one
 would not ensure the rejection of the other.
 They who had estimated their first sovereign

* 1 Sam. x. 24.

† Ibid.

‡ Isaiah liii. 2. The Jews seem to have reasoned with
 the Epicureans, if the above passage has a physical import.
Deum non modo aliqua, sed pulcherima specie esse decet.
Cic. de Nat. Deorum. Lib. i. c. 10.

by bodily superiority, how should they suddenly rise to the philosophy of intellectual greatness, to the pure comprehension of a spiritual dominion in the person of an Heavenly King? They who had hailed only the worldly accomplishments of Saul, how should they but exclaim of the "man of sorrows," "Away with him, crucify him."* Again, before Saul could effect the universal submission of his people, he was obliged to flatter their temporal desires. [He gained a great victory over the Ammonites; nor was it, till reconciled by this specimen of worldly power, that they confirmed the kingdom in his person at Gilgal, and called for the punishment of the disaffected party.† But what was the inauguration of Christ, as interpreted by himself from the prophet: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal

* S. Luke xxiii. 21.

† 1 Sam. xi. 14.

"the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance
"to the (spiritual) captives, and recovering
"of sight to the blind."* What a differ-
ence of office is here announced! and how
peculiarly calculated to provoke the con-
tempt of a gross and worldly-minded gene-
ration!

If this attempt of the Jew at secular ag-
grandizement promised effects so hostile to
the dominion of Christ, what farther con-
viction may we not receive from his impa-
tience of secular abasement! Behold him
then at a later period, while the voice of
prophecy denounces to his reluctant ear the
certainty of temporal punishment for the
spiritual offences committed by him, against
that religion, for the sake of which alone,
the favour of Heaven had been poured upon
him.

* St. Luke. iv. 18.

"Take

“Take thee a roll of a book,” says God to Jeremiah, “and write therein all the words that I have spoken against Israel and against Judah. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”* But what is the effect of the Divine threatenings on the mind of the Jew? Placed between the voice of the Lord and the fear of man, what is his behaviour? Does he remember the sin of his idolatry, and cry unto God against its consequences now ready to fall upon him: or does he harden himself in his iniquity, and aggravate his punishment? Impressions of this world overcome the call of another, and Nebuchadnezzar affects him more than the Lord his God, who had once brought

* Jer. xxxvi. 2. 3.

him out of Egypt, and who would again have preserved him, had he been capable of tempering an earthly with an heavenly thought, of flying to supplication instead of meditating resistance. Jehoiakim seizes the book of the prophet, and destroys it in the fire which was "burning before him;"* as if the truth of the immortal prediction were to perish with the leaves that recorded it! He commands also to "take Baruch the scribe, and Jeremiah the prophet," the instruments by whom the will of God was conveyed to him; but it is added, "the Lord hid them"† from his fury. Compare this conduct with that which followed the Saviour's denunciations against the latter impenitence of Jerusalem. If the voice of the prophet had said, "The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this

* Jer. xxxvi. 22.

† Jer. xxxvi. 26.

"land,

"land, and shall cause to cease from thence
 "man and beast,"* that of Christ finally de-
 clared concerning the devoted city," The
 "days shall come, when thine enemies shall
 "cast a trench about thee, and compass
 "thee round, and keep thee in on every
 "side, and shall lay thee even with the
 "ground, and thy children within thee, be-
 "cause thou knewest not the time of thy
 "visitation."† What is their manner of
 receiving this last denunciation against their
 hardness of heart? the same which charac-
 terised them under the former. The threat-
 ened vengeance comes from Rome instead
 of Babylon, but the passions which it ex-
 cites betray a like spirit amid both visita-
 tions. The "word of the Lord" was once
 more the object of their hatred: the person
 who pronounced it against them, was seized
 and slain, and the worldly-minded children,

* Jer. xxxvi. 29.

† St. Luke. xix. 43. 44.
did

did but act over again, on a larger scale, the same malice of which their worldly-minded forefathers had given the appropriate indications.*

We have adduced these instances to shew that the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, was but in consonance with their former conduct, and that the whole proceeded from a worldly spirit fostered in them, by a fatal and preconceived opinion of a temporal supremacy, falsely interpreted from their scriptures.

If we enquire what it was which gave birth to this system of misinterpretation, it will be found perhaps in that appearance of

* St Stephen connects the early with the later Jews in this iniquity. Acts. vii. 52. The Saviour does the same in the parable of the Lord of the vineyard. St. Matthew, xxi. 33. &c. see also St. Luke xiii. 33.

prosperity, which effected by the Divine protection, but arrogated to themselves, made an indispensable part of their earlier history. Their deliverance from Egypt, however produced, did but begin this train of thought, the more offensive object of it being to establish them in a promised land stored with temporal blessings. Their progress towards it, in spite of the efforts of those who stood in the way of the attainment of their hopes, was of the same kind, and served to strengthen the notion already entertained. But the complete acquisition of the long-expected territory was the seal of these preparations, and gave the final cast to their minds. They were introduced to it, amid the semblance of temporal greatness; they fought battles, they gained victories, and were fixed in the land of plenty by the arm of power.

It

It is true, that, while the Jew was eagerly imbibing this notion of worldly authority he might have received a stronger impression from another of an opposite tendency, had his mind been as well disposed to listen to the one as the other. He might have seen that it was the influence of Heaven alone which controuls these events in his favour, and that it was the importance of his religious worship which called for a previous temporal establishment. But, however transient the seeming prosperity which attended this meaner, yet necessary acquisition, it was allowed by him to form that earthly attachment which pursued him through the whole of his subsequent experience, and finally proved so hostile to the person of an heavenly Redeemer. His first protection having necessarily involved a worldly inheritance, he never swerved from the opinion, that, from this foundation, the future structure of an eternal empire must arise. Hence
and the

the error of the Jew. The agency of his God towards him had been inevitably of a mixed nature; its principle lay in another world, its action in this; and the object of it, though borrowing an immediate temporal cast, was ultimately of a spiritual nature. But the Divine intentions, requiring to be thus observed through a mortal medium, either escaped his grossness, or made inadequate impression on his reluctance. Heaven became confounded with earth, and he calculated the whole of his situation by the prevalence of his worldly propensities. The portentous circumstances attending his rescue from slavery, had not their correspondent effect, nor were sufficiently distinguished by him from the possible efforts of nature; the singular overthrow of the adversary, who would have loaded him again with his antient chains, was soon regarded as a common defeat; and amid the expulsion of the possessors of his destined seat,

his

his mind was too much agitated to examine with precision the true cause of his own superiority. Amid the din of arms, he was not sufficiently cool to consider how much was due to one agency, how much to another; the hurry of the moment confounded ideas so different, and, amid the conduct of supernatural power, he blindly supposed himself established by his proper prowess, his national might.

It was this original mistake, which, brooding for ages over the expectation of a Messiah, perverted the testimony given of him, and obstinately made him to spring from this world, instead of descending from above. We see the force of persuasion in the history of the Saviour himself. For on one occasion, he is obliged to correct his very disciples, who, in continuation of the systematic error, ask him, "Lord, wilt thou, at this

"this time, *restore* the kingdom to Israel?"^{*} And, on another, is represented as escaping privately, after the performance of a certain wonderful work, lest the Jews, ever disposed to give effect to their ancient prejudice, should "take him by force, and make him "a king."[†]

We then see the origin of the mistaken opinion of the Jew, that his Messiah should be a person, whose nature was not to exceed his own; the notion of a temporal supremacy necessarily inducing that of a mortal sovereign.[‡] Whatever splendor might be made to exist within this narrow boundary described by himself, the Jew was ready to confer on the object of his desire, and the human condition thus exclusively allotted

* Acts i. 6. Whitby offers an emendation of the text, much to the purpose of these Discourses. See also his reprehension of Mr. le Clerc on St. Luke, i. 74.

† St. John vi. 15. ‡ See Whitby on Romans ix. 5.

to him, was to be crowned with the highest appropriate good. In earlier cases bearing a certain analogy to the present, he had thought in a different manner. During the whole process of his history, he had been accustomed to the visitations of celestial messengers under mortal figures, and had learnt to revere their assumed appearance on account of the imputed perfections of their angelic natures.* But his opinion of Christ was singularly different, and degraded the long-drawn ministration of the host of heaven, to the unworthy introduction of a perishable man, like to himself. Could he have attached the notion of an interior Godhead to an outward manhood, he might have rectified the fatal error which flowed from a decided separation of the two characters. But seeing his asserted

* The charge of St. Paul, Hebrews xiii. 2. is founded on this experience of the Jews. See Whitby on the passage.

Messiah come in the lowest circumstances of that humanity, whose only lustre his imagination had prepared for him, he spurned the proffered salvation, because the nature of its display was abhorrent from his anticipation of it, and its tendency contradicted the original and prevailing wish of his heart.

This then having been the uniform prejudice of the Jew, it will explain the whole tenor of his conduct. His infidelity will be promoted by it in whatever situation. In prosperity, it grows into insolence against his God, and leads to the perpetration of the forbidden idolatry;* in adversity it becomes as we have seen, resentment at the contradiction of his hopes, and, what should have been repentance, is, by the force of this preconceived opinion, turned into exasperation. Upon this principle, his dis-

* Jeremiah, v. 7.

graces and his triumphs are attended with the same effects. Disappointment conspires with vanity in producing the fatal determination; and Christ is equally unacceptable to the Jew, whether a slave or a conqueror; whether he drive out the nations from the lot of his inheritance, or himself be carried away captive to Babylon; whether he march to possess the "land of the Canaanites, and "unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, "the river Euphrates;"* or whether his ignominy float between Syria and Egypt, and Antiochus † possess him for a while, or he become the portion of Ptolemy;‡ whether he revert to his former subjection, or, after a momentary assumption of indigenious royalty,§ fall under the final dominion of

* Deut. i. 7. † 1 Maccabees, i. 20. ‡ 1 Maccabees, xi. 13.

§ Αριστεβλος την αρχην εις βασιλειαν μεταδηναι δοξας, ειρηνεν γαρ οτως, διαδημα πρωτος επιτιθεται μετα τετρακοσιων αριθμον ετων και ογδοηκοντα και ενος. Josephus de Antiq. Jud. L. 13. c. 11. sect. 1.

Rome; that Rome, with which he had aspired to incorporate himself by equal treaties,* if by any means he might arrive at the establishment of the worldly sovereignty,

* 1 Maccabees viii. 19. Julian scorns to mention this alliance between Rome and Jerusalem. See his proud enumeration of the Jewish miseries. Pressing the Christians for the reasons why they had adopted the God of the Jews instead of his own Jupiter, he sarcastically asks, *ἀρ' ὅτι βασιλευσιν ἔδοσαν οἱ θεοὶ τῇ Ῥώμῃ, τοῖς Ἰσδαίοις ολίγον μὲν χρόνον ἐλευθεροὺς εἶναι, δελεῦσαι δὲ αὖ καὶ παροικησάι; Σκοπεῖ τ' Ἀβραμ, &c.* He goes on with their various slavery, till he traces them into his own hands. *Ἀσσυριοῖς, Μηδοῖς, Περσικοῖς ἐδεδούσαν, ἐτα νυν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς.* St. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 6. p. 210. May it be allowed us to hope that we have pointed out the proper object of this worldly depression of the Jews. Julian (who did but repeat his argument from its inventor, Apion) might have seen in it an indication of that Christ whom he rejected. He might also have remembered a good reply of Octavius to the Pagan insult of the Jews and their Deity, drawn from the Hebrew captivities, Prius eos deseruisse comprehendens, quam esse desertos; nec, ut impie loqueris, cum Deo suo captos, sed a Deo, ut disciplinæ transfugas deditos. Minucius Felix, p. 319. Ed. Ouzel. Lugd. 1672.

which

which Heaven, intending him for a far different rule, had from the beginning forbidden to his demands.

We might here conclude, acquiescing in the conviction received from the worldly prejudice of the Jew, hostile to a spiritual dominion amidst all circumstances, prosperous or adverse. But we will add to the strength of our inference by a short reflection of another kind. It is his habitual proneness to the adulteration of his religion, which affords this accessory argument. In the earlier part of his history we find him given to idolatry, in the latter, to tradition; while his proper worship suffers from both his errors. The one is proved by the first commandment given him from the Mount,* and anxiously enforced by his

* Spencer de Rit. Heb. Lib. 1. c. 2. f. 1. Philo Judæus, περι δεκαλογίων, Vol. 2. p. 189. πλῆθος τις ἡ μικρὸς τοῦ πλῆθους τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος κατεσχήμεν, &c. &c.

prophets;

prophets; the other by the repeated re-proofs of his Saviour.* This propensity to the corruption of his faith, shewing itself in various shapes, fell with the aggregated force of ages against the implicit submission now demanded to a revelation final and unalterable. His original love of the superstitious rites and multiplied deities of the Heathens, had it been continued would have been too repugnant to the nature of Christianity,† whose spirit was equally irreconcilable with his newer opinions. These were a minor branch of Heathenism, the character of whose mythology it was to

* St. Matthew xv. 3. St. Mark vii. 7—9. St. John v. 43, 44. See also Dr. Jortin's "Discourses," &c. Disc. I. and 2. p. 28, 33, III.

† It is no argument against us, that the Heathens themselves have embraced the Gospel. The Jews were called upon for a national and immediate acceptance of it. The conversion of the Gentiles was a slower product of ages; nor, after all, was it impeded by the characteristic objection which still affects the minds of the Jews.

have

have been formed by successive inventions, accidentally made, and credulously received.* His corruptions had but travelled from the eye to the mind, and his adoration of idols was continued in a spurious reverence towards traditions. Therefore, whether he preserves or abandons his first attachment; whether, before the correction of his Babylonish captivity, he follows after "Baalim, and makes Baal-Berith his God,"† or, at a subsequent period, is brought by "bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices" of the Greeks,‡ his mind, perverted, in both situations, by similar errors, though of different names, will be equally indisposed towards the expectation of the gospel. A simplifying law, restraining the excesses of wandering imagination, and limiting his

* Cicero calls these superstitions, *Poetarum et pictorum portenta*, *Tuscul. Quest. Lib. 1.* See *Herodot. Lib. 2. c. 53.* Ed. Lond. 1679.

† Judges viii. 33.

‡ Maccabees vi. 7.

obedience,

obedience, throws too grievous a burden on the prudence of his traditional passion. Armed with the self-derived opinions of his glossing forefathers, he encounters the divine authority of his Saviour,* and to the doctrines of God prefers the "commandments of men."

Here again, then, is the argument afforded to us by the Jew for the solution of his enmity to the gospel. He had been impelled to the acceptance of it both by the depression of his political consequence,† and by the ascendancy granted to his religion.‡ But the predominant cause that operates against his faith, is a fatal and preconceived opinion of a temporal sovereignty falsely insisted on from his scriptures; to which, by way of accessory proof, is joined his habitual love

* St. Mark vii. 5.

† Discourse I.

‡ Discourse II.

either of idolatry or tradition, each of them incompatible with Christianity.

Having accomplished what we had proposed concerning the Jew, we will extend our enquiry to the Greek. Therefore, in the next Discourse, we will see what were the peculiar reasons which might have impelled him also to the acceptance of the Gospel. His rejection of it will follow, and the subject will conclude.

IT is with peculiar interest that we view
are all of the Gospel, view the Gos-
pel, after the rejection of it by the
offering will be the acceptance of the
Gospel. For, though it were, from adu-

M

DIS-

either of idolatry or tradition, each of them
incompatible with Christianity.

Having accomplished what we had pro-
posed concerning the Jew, we will extend
our capacity to the Greek. Therefore, in
the next Discourse, we will see what were
the peculiar reasons which might have im-
pelled him also to the acceptance of the
Gospel. His rejection of it will follow, and
the subject will conclude.

DISCOURSE IV.

ROMANS CH. I. VER: 17.

TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH, TO
THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE
GREEK.

IT is with peculiar interest, that we, who
are also of the Gentiles, view the Gos-
pel, after the rejection of it by the Jew,
offering itself to the acceptance of the
Greek. For, though it went, from suffer-

ing the disbelief of the one, to encounter the contradiction of the other,* it was no longer confined by a predilection, either local or personal. The Jew, to whom "it" was necessary that the word of God "should first be spoken,"† might have appropriated the management of revelation, under Divine Providence, to himself, and, instead of receiving his proper faith, as he one day must, reflected back upon him from the Gentiles, might have been, by national selection, the privileged instrument of its conveyance to the rest of the world. But no universal effect was attached either to the belief or incredulity of the Greek. All mankind became immediately, and by their own title admissible to the full reception of Christianity, together with himself.

We have already tried the Jew by his proper standard. But the Greek, called to

• See Note • page 1 Acts xiii. 46.

the same faith, must have a different treatment, equally springing from his own peculiarities. The Jew had enjoyed a national connection with the Gospel, a connection brought down from the earliest times, and confirmed by a polity instituted, a preparatory religion expressly framed for him, in short, by the whole train of his former experience. The Greek was called to a sudden approbation of a system, in which nothing but his curiosity could hitherto have been interested; with which an event, the seeming consequence of accident alone, and coming from another quarter, offered to unite him. The one is to be impelled by the testimony of ages, the other by the suggestions of the moment: the reluctant Jew solicited by a long series of revelation, introductory of its last and perfect display; the speculative Greek, unawares presented with a standard of faith to be scanned by instant reasoning, and the rules of an exist-
ing

ing criticism. Let us enquire, then, what were some of the characteristic arguments which might thus have applied themselves to him in favour of the Gospel.*

Descended from a people equally distinguished by fiction and incredulity,† whose fancy had always carried them to the invention of the marvellous, and whose philoso-

* It will be observed that we have selected for the persuasion of the Greek, such arguments only as should seem to arise most naturally from his previous opinions. St. Chrysostom supports us in this, by the notice he takes of the management of St. Paul's address to the Athenians.

Ἐκείθεν πρὸς Ἕλληνας διελεγέτο, τὰς ὁδοὺς τῶν ἡμετέρων
 τίθενοντες ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκῶν αὐτοῦς ἐκκράσας δογματῶν.
 Adv. Jud. β. vol. 6. p. 323.

† ————— Quicquid Græcia mendax

Audet in historia

Says Juvénal of the first of these propensities, Sat. 10,
 174.

Primum Graius Homo—exclaims Lucretius of him
 who gloried in establishing the second, Lib. 1. 167.

phy

phy to its rejection, who fastidiously destroyed with one hand what they luxuriantly created with the other, what would so soon engage the attention of the Greek to the Gospel as its miraculous economy?

However warm his imagination, the Greek could mark out, with much circumspection, the limits of credibility and its contrary. Comparing the nature of events with the asserted concomitance of prodigies, he had learned to distinguish between the one and the other, and, in the conduct of his national writings, knew what to receive and what to refuse.* If we ask the principle

* Dionysius Halicarnassensis reprobates Theopompus for mixing the images of prodigy with the narration of real events, *Εν οἷς ἐστὶ καὶ περὶ Σειλῆνι τῷ Φαιεντῷ ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸ δράκοντος, &c.* These he gives as some of the offences committed by that writer against the nature of history, *κατὰ τοῦ πραγμᾶτικόν τοκόν ἀμαρτάνει* Ep. ad Pomp. c. 19. Strabo expressly condemns Herodotus

and

ciple of his discrimination, we find it in the incongruity which he discovers between the portent and its purpose. Seeing no just demand for supernatural power, he will not allow its needless interference, and, with critical exactness, confines to earthly agency the production of events, which, independently of extraneous assistance, it is well able to accomplish.

Coming

and others who disfigured history by their meretricious taste for splendid falsehoods, *ὡς περ ἡδυσμα τι τῇ λογῇ τὴν τερατικὴν προσφέροντες*, Lib. 17. p. 563. Thucydides is supposed to have intended a similar correction in certain celebrated words which contrast the solidity of his own production with the fugitive ornaments of preceding writers. Camerarii Proœm. in Hist. Herod. And in other places he upbraids those to whom the sobriety of historic truth is too grievous a restraint, *οἱς ἀταλαικῶρος ἐστὶν ἡ ζητήσις τῆς ἀληθείας*, and promises that his own representation of things shall be far removed from the licence of poetry, *ἐκ ὡς ποιεῖται ὑμνηκασί περὶ αὐτῶν*, Thucyd. Hist. Lib. 1. c. 21. Ed. Duker. The extacy of Longinus knows to lower itself, while he recommends to his rhetorician,

Coming to the Gospel with this opinion, and invited by it to accept the relation of its miracles, he will be satisfied concerning their sufficient reason, ere he believes; he will enquire into the worthiness of the object to be accomplished by them. If the object is in any respect inadequate to the miracles, he will reject them; but if it is of an importance fully answerable, if it is such as, from analogy, he supposes incapable of being effected without miracles, he must

rhetorician, Sect. 15. the *εμπρακτικον και εναληδες* in opposition to the machinery of the poets: and Aristotle represses even their wantonness, while he confronts their province with that of the historian, De Poet. c. 9. It would be superfluous to quote similar sentiments from the Latins; but the argument of Cicero against the supposed interference of the Deity in a well-known instance, is so apposite to our reasoning, that we cannot but state it, *Nec Homerum audio, says he, qui Ganymedem a Diis raptum ait, ut Jovi pocula ministraret: non justa causa, cur Laomedonti tanta fieret injuria, Tusc. Quæst. Lib. 1.* He has a similar conclusion from the miraculous dream of the money-finder, De Divin. Lib. 2. c. 65.

accept them; not indeed for their own sake, (for he well knows that abstracted miracles are impertinent) but for the sake of the reason that attends and justifies them. The order of things is here reversed, and he begins to believe with laudable precision, from the end to be accomplished. The miraculous narration which first meets his eye, comes last in the arrangement of his mind; and, though primarily and singly considered, it would deserve to be rejected, yet secondarily and with relation to its purpose, it justly demands his assent.

He had read of his own Deities vexatiously drawn from their heaven for the accomplishment of projects either too trifling or too corrupt for their supposed natures. Hence his reasonable incredulity.* But the Gospel

* Carneades reprobates these fictions through the mouth of Cotta. *Rumoribus mecum pugnas*, says he to the

Gospel presented him with a far more dignified scene. Instead of a momentary display of supernatural power recorded of beings exerting themselves on incompetent errands, and suddenly remanded to their former abode, he there read the history of the Son of God appearing on earth during an important number of years, and for a purpose equal to so well-supported a prodigy. To teach that wisdom which the Greek had fought so long in vain, to establish the immortality of man generally doubted by him,* to exhibit the Creator in a connected agency

Stoic who was drawing too serious a conclusion from such tales, *ego autem a te rationes requiro.* Cicero de Nat. Deorum, Lib. 3. c. 5.

* Not all the authority of Plato, absolute in other respects over the mind of Panætius, could induce him to acquiesce in the immortality of the soul. *Quem enim omnibus locis divinum, quem sapientissimum, quem sanctissimum, quem Homerum philosophorum appellat, hujus*

agency with his creatures, an agency never before imagined,* begun from the foundation of the world, and then at length brought to perfection, and to sanction the acceptance of the divine communications

hanc unam sententiam non probat, Tusc. Qu. Lib. 1.

In the same book are seen the dissensions of the philosophers on this subject. Even those who thought the soul a different essence from the body, could not agree as to its duration when separated from it. *Qui discedere animum censent, alii statim dissipare, alii diu permanere, alii semper.* For more of these discordant opinions, consult Lactantius, *De Vita Beata, Lib. 7. c. 7.*

* No consistent agency could be imagined concerning deities, of the reality of whose being, as well as of whose nature, there were the greatest doubts. How clearly is not the blessing of revelation seen in the miserable confession of an uncertain philosophy! *Eos ipsos, qui se aliquid certi habere arbitrantur, addubitare coget doctissimorum hominum, de maxima re tanta dissensio. Cic. de Nat. Deor. L. 1. c. 6.* In short, whoever goes to Paganism for information on this head, finds nothing satisfactory, from the inconsistency of Plato himself, down to the grossness of Euhemerus.

with

with the firm promise of eternal rewards in a future life, scarcely anticipated by the Greek, but through the faint shadowings of fable;* to accomplish this, and more than this, was the purpose of the Gospel. And to so great a purpose, how should the Greek refuse whatever train of antecedent miracles?† He knew that supreme power alone could

* See a statement of these fables and the contempt of them in Plutarch, De Superstitione. Dionysius Halic. alludes to a future judgment in Tartarus, only as a tale by which to illustrate a critical truth, *μοι δοκεῖ ὡς ὁ μυθονομενος οὖτοι τῶν ψυχῶν ἀπολυθεσθαι τὰ σημεῖα ἐξέτασμος ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ δικάσαν, ἥτις ἀκριβὲς ἀναι ὁ δια τὴ θεοφομπῶ γραφῆς γιγνομενος.* Ep. ad Cn. Pomp. c. 19. See Juvenal, Sat. 2. 149. for the general disregard of these fables among the Romans. Cicero states this with equal strength, Num te illa terrent, triceps apud inferos Cerberus, Cocytii fremitus, &c. fortasse etiam inexorabiles judices. Tusc. Q. Lib. 1.

† “The only case,” says Mr. Locke, “wherein a mis-
“ sion of any one from Heaven, can be reconciled to the
“ high and awful thoughts men ought to have of the
“ Deity,

could produce the mighty effect. Had human ability been equal to the task, that ability had been long since supplied by himself. He is, therefore, impelled to the acceptance of the Gospel by two causes at once; he is influenced by the sufficient reason that justifies its miraculous agency, and is farther persuaded by the suggestions of his own vanity.

Proceeding thus towards conviction, the Greek sees not only the propriety, but the necessity of miracles for the establishment of the Gospel; that nothing less than wonders could have been employed in its behalf.

“Deity, must be the revelation of some supernatural truths relating to the glory of God, and some great concern of man.” Discourse of Miracles, Posthumous Works. See a statement of reasons for the appearance of Christ on earth in Lactantius. Div. Inst. Lib. 4. c. 10, &c.

We

We have already seen that his taste had ejected the marvellous from the conduct of his national history, whose scope being nothing more than human, was not to be crossed by an agency incongruous with humanity. He knew the proper limits of such performances. These, if they will be accepted, must bring their accounts as nearly as possible to the level of common life, nor hazard any violent departure from the general representation of events. They describe man in nothing but his mortal capacity; and having led the bravest and the wisest spirits through the usual circle of waging wars and making laws, let them perish, and pass on to the description of successors vested with similar employments. This had been his accustomed history, in which, whatever was inserted of supernatural action, was so much inconsistency, and therefore not to be received. But, looking into the Gospel, and inquiring its motive

to and

and tendency, he finds, that the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ being of a nature absolutely singular, and infinitely superior to the possible atchievement of any historical personage, and, therefore, miraculous from the first, must be continued with suitable novelty, with correspondent power. There would be an inconsequence without this relative proportion; the beginning of revelation would not be conformable with the end, and the whole scheme would be illogical and inconclusive, because composed of disagreeing and incombineable principles; here something high, there something low; on one hand a triumphant display of Divine Wisdom, on the other the disgraceful contradiction of human infirmity. But, as the Greek surveys it, each of its parts is in harmony with the other, while all conspire to enforce that belief which is the proper result of uniformity and consistence. The wonderful plan
of

of redemption, conceived in heaven, is ushered into the world in a similar manner. The conductor of that redemption is not born in the common way of men, (that would have been inadmissible) but by wonder; wonderful wisdom in forms his lips, he speaks as "never man spake;" he heals diseases by wonders, and casts out devils; wonders attend his death, as they had distinguished his life; nor must he, whose first entrance into mortality was inevitably different from that of mortals themselves, be detained by the last necessity which would oppress them. He rises again from the dead, (the pledge of their future resurrection through him) and returns to that heaven, from which his extraordinary purpose first made him descend.

In this view, the miracles of the Gospel have the same force of belief for the Greek with his own historical facts. Nay, they

proceed

proceed farther; and (if there can be any gradation of miraculous power, when we have once stepped beyond the bounds of nature) they will be more and more convincing in proportion as they are more and more portentous. Human history is credited according to its nearer and nearer approach to the line of natural truth. The process of divine history (if it will continue to be divine) must be different; and, instead of terminating on earth, must perpetually look towards heaven, from whence it began its career. Of course, its economy will be progressively miraculous. For man, acting from his nature, which is shared by other men, and is, therefore, intelligible to them, does what is not wonderful to his fellow-creatures; while God, acting from his nature as well, but not dividing the peculiarity of that nature with any other, does what to our minds must have the appearance of miracle.

On this ground it is, that wonders lose their usual incredibility, and compel the Greek with all the evidence of his own historical facts. His reason is not set at utter defiance by the extraordinary nature of the Gospel, but is successfully applied in the latter stage to confirm that which staggered it in the former; the supernatural is assisted by the natural, and revelation condescends to stand supported by the conclusions of common sense. Miracles and right reason, after a temporary distance, unite, and persuade the mind with combined effect; and that which, without such a consideration, might fall under the imputation of "foolishness," becomes, by this happy coalition, the "power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Such might have been the conviction of the Greek, from the miraculous economy of the Gospel. He is constrained to accept it, on account of the purpose to which

it tends, a purpose too lofty to be accomplished but by the means of miracles. Thus prepared, then, he will be the more ready to acquiesce in the divine nature of the Gospel doctrines.* For, if an unexampled design, such as that of salvation, is for the sake of a correspondent testimony, to be accompanied with an agency more than human, the precepts intended to assist as the medium of that design, must be also above mortality; that supernatural evidence may arise on both sides, and miraculous acts be supported by the congruent force of miraculous instructions. And what, indeed, but

* We suppose our Greek inclined to reason with Mr. Locke, who remarks the natural connection between these two points. "He (Christ) was sent by God: his miracles shew it; and the authority of God in his precepts cannot be questioned. Here morality has a sure standard, that revelation vouches, and reason cannot gainsay; but *both together* witness to come from God the great law-maker." Reasonableness of Christianity, Vol. 2. p. 534. Ed. Fo.

the

the mind of the Deity could have suggested such a perfection of sentiment, as is displayed in the morality of the Gospel? To what ethicks of his own should the Greek have gone for such a sublimity of virtue as must have abashed him in the Christian revelation? To correct the outward action, had

* Mr. Gibbon pleased himself with having found, in a writer who lived four hundred years before the publication of the Gospel, a precept worthy to be compared with its golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do to them," St. Matthew, vii. 12. The Pagan sentence is, *ἀπασχοντες ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ὀργιζέσθε, ταῦτα τοῖς ἄλλοις μὴ ποιεῖτε*. Moscat. Or. Nicoc. The inference is injurious. For, not to mention that the Saviour gives his precept as the spirit of the "law and the prophets," the two passages are essentially different. 1. In that of the Greek, revenge is not forbidden; the command is, not to abstain from retaliation on an offender, but simply, not to offer to a second person the same causeless injury which has been suffered from a first. 2. *Anger* stands confessed in it, the uncondemned consequence of suffering. In short the Heathen precept

had been the partial effort of his own morality. To purify the inward disposition, was the discriminating feature of that of the Gospel. The decency of ostensible offices was sufficient for human injunction; but to invest unseen thought with the full consequences of open perpetration; to sanctify

precept is a mere prohibition of wanton harm. The Christian is an injunction of positive and mutual good, mutually desired. The proper parallel to the charge of Isocrates is to be found in Tobit, c. iv. 15. For certain imperfections in the morality of Mr. Gibbon's Pagan Champion, see Diatrib. 5. of H. Stephens in his edition of Isocrates, 1593. It may also be added, that Aristotle commends certain kinds of indignation, *ὁ δὲ νεμεσσητικός, εὐσμενός*, Magn. Mor. Lib. 1. De Indignatione. Nothing would be more easy than, in the loose way of Mr. Gibbon, to carry on an insincere parallelism between revelation and Paganism. Some new Philostratus may, with equal truth, maintain the appositeness of their miracles as well as doctrines. With this view, compare Apul. Florid. 19. with St. Luke, vii. 11—15. For the character of the first Philostratus, see Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. V. 1. p. 256. Maclaine's translation.

the

the "hidden man of the heart," and to present both "soul and body an holy and "acceptable sacrifice" to their Creator, was a sudden universality of religious design, that could only proceed from the omniscient Searcher of spirits.

Perhaps the Greek had already examined the law of Moses, and had been inclined to think disrespectfully of the advantage possessed over the Gentile morality by the Decalogue.* But what must he have thought

* We measure our Greek by the standard of Julian, who, after enumerating the precepts of the Decalogue, asks, Ποιον εθνος εστι, προς των θεων, εχω τε, & προσκυνησας θεοις ετεροις και τε, μνησθητι των σαββατων, ο μη τις αλλας οיעται χρηναι φυλατλαν εντολας; S. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 5. 152. The reasons which, in the opinion of Paganism, led to these exclusive commandments, may be seen in the ignorant and careless statement of Justin, Lib. 36. c. 2. and in Dio Cassius, Lib. 37. c. 18, 19. An injurious derivation of the word "Sabbath," is refuted by Josephus,

cont.

of the doctrine of the new covenant, which came in aid of that of the old, already superior to his own ethicks? It must have come from Heaven; since earth had never been able to produce the like. For there is an eternal difference between the chance of discoveries in science, and improvements in morality. The ingenuity of the Greek had distinguished itself in the former line, so as to defy all comparison with his progress in the latter. In his own person he afforded a melancholy confirmation of this truth, and was at once philosophical and depraved. The corrupt propensities of his

cont. Ap. Lib. 2. c. 2. The text supposes the Jewish law to have been long familiar to the Greek. This appears from Philo Judæus, who talks of its fame, as spread throughout the world. It was the name of Moses against which Grecian envy is supposed by him to be directed, *ἐν ἐβελήσαντων αὐτοῦ μνημὸς ἀξίωσαι τὸν παρ' Ἑλλήσι λογίων.* De Vita Mosis, Vol. 2. Lib. 1. p. 80. For more of this silent enmity of the Greeks towards the Jews, see Josephus, cont. Ap. Lib. 1.

nature

nature having no necessary combination with propositions merely mental, his science had continued its operations at pleasure, and undisturbed; but rules of life being inevitably mingled with the emotions of the heart, and the whole of their effect depending on the success of the struggle between both, his morality had made but trivial advances; * natural corruption checking, in

* The difference between the ornament of the Greek, and the virtue of the Christian, is well marked by St. Cyril. Though it was given to the former, *το εὐζόμενον δυνασθαι, και κομῶν κερκισθαι δαμν τῷ κατὰ λέξιν*, yet he asks, *υτοι δε παντως γεν ἂν ορθοι μεν ως δοξαν την επι Θεῳ, χρηστοι δε της τροπης, επιεικεις και σωφρονεις, σεπτοι τε και δικαιοι, και ζωης αριστης επιμεληται*; Cont. Jul. Vol. 2. Lib. 7. p. 223. The respective virtues of Christianity and Paganism are again well distinguished by Lactantius: *Parcum esse, aut constantem, aut cautum, aut quietum, aut fortem, aut severum, virtutes sunt quidem, sed hujus temporariae vitae. Nos autem, qui hanc vitam contemnimus, alias nobis virtutes propositas habemus, de quibus philosophi ne suspicari quidem ulla ratione potuerant.*—De vero Cultu, Lib 6. c. 14.

almost an equal degree, its first conception, and its subsequent operation. Hence the distinction, between goodness and knowledge, the distance that separates the Christian from the Greek; hence the natural wisdom lying open without interruption to the one, and the holiness brought by indispensable revelation to the other.

But the conclusions of the Greek must have been equally favourable to the Gospel, even if he had falsely deemed its morality not superior to his own. For recurring to the principle already in force against his historical prodigies, he enquires the purpose to which the precepts of Paganism would lead him. This again he finds to be unworthy of the precepts, which therefore do not influence him. For why is he commanded to contradict the propensities of his nature, and to practise the painful austerities which the framers of his own ethicks would lay

lay upon him? That he may die, and perish for ever; or barely imagine a future state, which he knows, was never assured to him with any convincing marks of authenticity.* The means are here disproportioned to the end; his morality fails of effect, because it violates his established rule of judgment; nor can he be persuaded to actions which uselessly overleap their object. Looking out, therefore, for an adequate authority, on which to ground his virtue, with what satisfaction must the Greek have found it at length in the Gospel! There, promises equal to his utmost wishes, meet him at every step. There alone has obedience its

* Plato lets us see how light and accidental was the impression made by the Pagan images of a future state, *διτε γαρ λεγομενοι μυθοι περι των εν αδου, ως τον ενθαδε αδικησαντα δε εκδιδοναι δικην, καταγελωμενοι τωσ, τοτε δη σε-εφουσιν αυτη την ψυχην, μη αληθας ωσι.* De Repub. Lib. 1. p. 330. vol. 2. Ed. Serrapus, 1578. The approach of death alone could give a momentary suspicion that they might be founded.

sufficient recompence, and a "patient continuance in well doing" ensures to itself "eternal life."* His own precepts were never a part of any religious system given under proper and consistent sanctions; and could only prove that certain writers happened in different ages and places to think more philosophically than others concerning human duties.† But the Gospel, not depending,

* Romans, ii. 7.

† Mr. Locke having observed, "how short the systems of the philosophers, before our Saviour's time, came of the perfection of a true and complete morality;" supposes, for the sake of argument, "that all the moral precepts of the Gospel were known by somebody or other among mankind before. But where, or how, or of what use," says he, "is not considered. Suppose they may be picked up here and there; some from Solon and Bias in Greece; others from Tully in Italy; and, to complete the work, let Confutius, as far as China, be consulted; and Anacarsis the Scythian contribute his share.—What would this amount to towards being a steady rule, a certain transcript of a law that

" we

depending, for its earlier or later discovery, on the accidental difference of one man from another in subtlety or depth of thinking, proposes its doctrines at once with a testimony uniform and convincing, and crowns their acceptance with rewards as transcendent as they are certain.*

“ we are under ? Did the saying of Aristippus, or Confutius, give it an authority ? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind ? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered, was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it, or reject it, as they pleased ; they were under no obligation : the opinion of this or that philosopher was of no authority.” Reasonableness of Christianity, Vol. 2. p. 353. Ed. Fo.

* Cicero, whose mind could not rest on the reports of such divine communications as the fickleness of Paganism had imagined, supposes that, if ever the Deity condescended to direct the actions of mortals, he would do it by the authority of open command, and open prohibition. *Deus, si quidem nobis consulebat, “ hoc facito,” — “ hoc ne feceris,” diceret.* De Divinatione, Lib. 2. c. 61. This alone could create responsibility on the part of man.

Here,

Here, then, is another argument, adding to the strength of the former conclusions; and the Greek has now an increased impulse towards Christianity. Nice in his demands of the requisite qualities in whatever was submitted to the test of his criticism; acute in discriminating the incongruous from the pertinent parts of his subject, and a fastidious lover of that unity of design, without which, no performance might hope to win his approbation, he has his demand satisfied in the economy of the Gospel. Though strange, it is acceptable, on account of the cogent perfection of its evidence; its miraculous conduct is allowed, because it is indispensably necessary to the purpose to be accomplished; and its doctrine is equally supernatural, because it alone has the power of influencing the heart to the required effect. The plan, though partaking of the agency of more than a single world,

world, yet exhibits one masterly whole; and the designs of Heaven are consistently executed upon earth.*

There are many other reasons which might well be insisted upon, in forming an estimate of the mind of the Greek, did our purpose allow the indulgence of so full a statement. He had been accustomed to reverence whatever effort denoted itself, by its greatness, to be above the common standard. And what but this greatness was presented to him in the Gospel? What but the sublimest views did it contain? It came

* The admiration of the Greek had been already bestowed upon this reconciling quality of human genius, producing historical unity from a plurality of subjects.

Dionysius Halic. speaking of the different merits of Herodotus and Thucydides with this view, says, Συμβεβηκε

τῷ μὲν, μικρὴν ὑποθεσὶν λαβόντι, πολλὰ ποιῆσαι μέρη τὰ ἐν σώματι· τῷ δὲ, τὰς πολλὰς καὶ ὅδεν εἰκνυίας ὑποθέσεως προελόμενῳ, συμφωνοῦν ἐν σώματι πεποινημέναι. Ep. ad Cr. Pomp. c. 13.

from

from Heaven, and its tendency was to Heaven again. Meanwhile, it issued its commands in a style of correspondent supremacy, and summoned the world to itself; the corrupt, to cleanse themselves in its purity; the lover of knowledge, to Him that knoweth all things; and the seeker of happiness, to Him who bestows such good things as "pass man's understanding."

One particular more, and we will conclude. If the former arguments may be supposed to have affected him; if he is persuaded by the sufficient reason of the Gospel miracles, by the supernatural excellence of its doctrines, and, in general, by the loftiness of its views, how must he be moved by its prophecies?

The Greek was no stranger to the notion of predictions, such as were those of Paganism, short-lived and but little adventurous.

turous. He had bowed with reverence to his own imagined oracles, pronouncing on the destiny of single actions, whose date was not remote, and whose limits were narrow. What superior veneration should he therefore have felt, not for an imputed, a momentary afflatus, but a true and continued inspiration? Inspiration, launching boldly into ages to come, and affecting all mankind by the accomplishment of events, whose consequences were at once universal and everlasting? And had he already compared similar prophecies from the Jewish history with their completion in his own, what peculiar confidence might he not have drawn from them for the acceptance of others presented anew to him from the same fountain of omniscience.*

But

* The loss of their own oracles, so grievously lamented by the Pagans, might have disposed the Greek to the ready acceptance of the Christian prophecies.

Q

—Non

But we now leave him; and in our next Discourse, will contemplate him amidst his rejection of what he ought to have accepted.

Non ullo sæcula dono
Nostra carent majore Deûm, quam Delphica sedes
Quod filuit

Says Lucan, Lib. 5, 100.

Alas! exclaims Planetiades, not only are the virtues fled from earth, as the poets sing, *Ἀλλὰ καὶ προνοία θεῶν συσκευασμένη τὰ χρησιμὰ πανταχοθεν οἰχεται*. Plutarch de Oraculorum Defectu. Vol. 7. p. 626. Ed. Lips. But Julian (who has a cure for every thing, without going to Christianity for it) after having mentioned the failure of the Hebrew prophecies, as well as the Egyptian oracles, comforts himself with the following substitute for inspiration, *Δεδωκεν ἡμῖν (Ζεὺς) διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν τεχνῶν ἐπισκεψιν ὑφ' ἧς πρὸς τὰς χρεῖας ἐξομεν τὴν ἀποχρησάν βοηθίαν*. St. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 6. p. 198.

DIS-

DISCOURSE V.

1 EP. CORINTHIANS, CH. ii. VER. 14.

BUT THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVETH
 NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF
 GOD, FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS
 UNTO HIM.

WE can never sufficiently lament the dangers that await the cause of truth. With whatever degree of real superiority she proposes her doctrines, some escape will yet

be found from the force which they carry with them, and the mind is content to take refuge in the opposite region of error. Either there is a stock of preconceived opinion checking the proper influence of her arguments; or waywardness of fancy, suddenly interposes its train of specious contradictions. In both cases, the welfare of man must suffer. Either truth is blunted at once by the impassive obstinacy of a prejudiced aversion; or ingenious perverseness takes up the cause, and distorts it by the flexible talent of too happy a misrepresentation. The former we have seen to be the characteristic of the Jew; the latter is that of the Greek; while the Gospel suffers alike from the opposite temper of each—is equally the scorn of the fullness of the one, and the versatility of the other.

In our last Discourse we endeavoured to furnish the Greek with some exercise for his reasoning

reasoning propensity. We indulged him with a revelation, where he might have admired that unity of plan, and that apt disposition of all its parts which he habitually demanded: but his mind, though perhaps in a train to acquiesce in that evidence, soon receives a stronger impression from a different and unexpected quarter. If the Gospel, before its acceptance, called on him to contemplate its divine economy; if it allowed him to establish his conviction by means of previous enquiry; this once done, it laid on him other conditions, necessarily resulting from the former, but totally unacceptable to his nature. If, by examination, the history of Christ was found to be nothing less than divine, and if its doctrine was of supernatural excellence; not only was credit to be given to the history, but obedience paid to the doctrine. This the projected salvation required; nor could the great purpose of the Gospel be accomplished without submission

submission to the medium of that purpose. Here then begins the uneasiness of the Greek. His mind once satisfied with the customary degree of examination, he leaves the Gospel for other researches, whose variety can alone relieve the restlessness of his habit. But the Gospel suddenly detains him with the consequences of his enquiry, and in return for its display of heavenly condescension demands the gratitude of mortal obedience.* His liberty of change is unawares arrested, and he disdains the unexampled confinement. He dreads the dull void of perpetual submission to a system, which, once scanned, is to him exhausted. His national treatises of morality he had cursorily read,

* Lactantius, lamenting that the Gospel was unacceptable to so many, gives, among others, the reason mentioned above. *Eaque (scil. Veritas) vel contemptui doctis est, quia idoneis assertionibus eget; vel odio indoctis, ob infitam sibi austeritatem, quam natura hominum proclivis in vitia pati non potest.* Div. Inst. Lib. I. c. I.

and

and followed or neglected their precepts at pleasure. Derived from no authority, they ended in none. He had amused himself with their speculations, beyond which they did not necessarily affect him. But the Gospel drew after it an indispensable practice. This was the new fetter which he refused to wear; and, in spite of what might have been his former conviction, he threw the whole from him.* Cut off from his
ancient

* It was the want of observing this characteristic difference between revelation and Paganism, that occasioned the scurrilities uttered by Julian against the expression of God's "*jealousy*," as to the religion of his people, θεος γαρ ζηλωτης. S. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 5. p. 155. an expression which the New Testament so frequently transfers to itself from the Old. No wonder this idea was new to Julian; the loose external rites of whose heathenism (an observation made somewhere by Lord Bacon) could be no object of jealousy to any Deity. *Nihil ibi differitur*, says Lactantius of that superstition, *quod proficiat ad mores excolendos, vitamque formandam, nec habet*
inqui-

ancient privilege of arbitrary attention, and spurning the restraint attempted, for the first time, on his mind, he forfeited his interest in revelation, because the austerity of religious obedience must have made him forego the volatility of his disposition.

There was another cause of his rejection of Christianity, intimately connected with the former. The Gospel reasoning from its superior descent, and resting on its peculiar faculty of leading mankind to salvation, proposed its acceptance in a stile of answerable exclusion; and while it enforced obedience to itself, suppressed all other religious systems, because inconsistent with its superior nature and design. It had been the genius of the old superstition, conscious of not proceeding from authority, to be less anx-

inquisitionem aliquam veritatis, sed tantummodo ritum colendi, qui non officio mentis, sed ministerio corporis constat. Div. Inst. Lib. 4. c. 3.

ious

ious in exerting it. * This seems to have been the true cause of its applauded indifference as to the additions accidentally made to the existing

* The admirers of Pagan indifference as to religious matters, may yet remember many instances of persecution amid their boasted indulgence. St. Paul was brought to Areopagus, and accused as a "fetter forth of strange Gods," Acts xvii. 18, 19. The same Athenians, at an earlier period, are said, *περιβρισις και απελασι τον Γαλλον, ως τα θεια καινοτομεντα*, Julian. Orat. 5. vol. 1. p. 159. The story of Socrates is too well known to be quoted. But Athenian bigotry is again conspicuous in the treatment of Protagoras, *τε δε Πρωταγορε τα βιβλια υπο Αθηναιων εκαυθη*, &c. Suidas in voc. Πρωταγ. Of this spirit of persecution, see other instances in Josephus cont. Ap. Lib. 2. c. 37. who charges the Athenians with punishing in a merciless manner whoever uttered a word against the national deities, *τας ρημα μονον κατα τας εκανων νομους Φβεγμαμενους περι θεων*. As to the Romans, they violated the temples even of their kindred idolaters, Cic. de Nat. Deorum, Lib. 1. c. 29. See the severity with which their own superstitions were protected, Cic. de Legibus, Lib. 2. c. 8. And, lastly, turn to the very interesting conference described by Dio Cassius be-

isting stock of religious opinions.* If it was at any time interested in such a contemplation, perhaps it felt a secret pleasure in seeing its own idolatry illustrated by the varieties of it discovered elsewhere; and its pride was soothed by the new, though differing, specimens of the same worshipping spirit.†

but

tween Augustus, Agrippa, and Mæcenas, in which the latter thus advises the sovereign, Το μὲν θεῖον παντὶ παντὸς αὐτοῦ τε σεβῆς, κατὰ τὰ πατρία, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀν-
 ΑΓΚΑΖΕ· τοὺς δὲ δι' ἑνίζοντας τι περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ μισεῖ
 καὶ ΚΟΛΑΖΕ. Lib. 52. c. 36. p. 689. vol. i. ed. Reimar.

* There was another cause for this religious liberality afforded by the political acquisitions which it made. Dum univerfarum gentium sacra suscipiunt (scil. Romani) etiam regna meruerunt. Minucius Felix. p. 52. Before their thirst of universal conquest, they had been very reluctant in this respect. See Valerius Maximus, Lib. i. c. 3. Livy, Lib. i. c. 20.

† See Lucii Ampelii, Lib. Mem. apud Florum, ed. Elz. "Quot fuere Joves," &c. and Cicero *de Nat. Deorum*, Lib. i. c. 29. for varieties of the same Gods.

Tacitus

but the nature of the Gospel was essentially different. It came invested with heavenly authority. This was its peculiar principle, justifying its claim of discrimination. From its appropriate advantages, it had the right of prescribing the terms of admission to them. Having particular good to bestow, a proportional strictness was allowable in the distribution of it. Hence the incompatibility of the Gospel with Paganism. But the Greek was not to be so persuaded, and his impatience spurned the unheard-of reproof, with which the voice of an apostle had bid him turn from the vanities of his own idolatry, to serve the living God.

Tacitus is every where reminded of the Roman worship by the Barbarian superstitions, De Moribus Germ. c. 9.

&c. Caesar had viewed the Gauls with a similar recollection, Lib. 6. Nay, the Jewish institutions themselves

excite this complacent spirit, and the Sabbath is interpreted into a mere respect for Saturn, Tacitus Hist. Lib. 5. c. 4.

Acts xiv. 15. the Lord distinguishing

Christian

R 2

He,

He, to whom all religions were alike indifferent, would allow distinction to none; or, attached to his ancient practice, could not so soon unlearn it, and embrace another system, at once unexampled and exclusive. An additional cause of offence must have been found by the Greek in the unanimity required from the professors of the same law of faith. Either giving way to an incurable restlessness of fancy, or thinking that truth was only to be elicited by an infinite process of disputation, he had habitually attached himself to the passing banner of this or that sophist, and split his persuasions into as many different portions as might be claimed by the hostile names of his multiplied leaders. To spirits so ambitiously contentious, what but dissatisfaction must have sprung from the peaceful acquiescence suddenly demanded by the Gospel? To sink the fond distinctions of party zeal into a

Christian

Christian adoption of "the same mind, and
 "the same judgment,"—speaking the
 "truth in love, to grow up into him in all
 "things, which is the head, even Christ;
 "from whom the whole body, fitly joined
 "together, and compacted by that which
 "every joint supplieth, according to the
 "effectual working in the measure of every
 "part, maketh encrease of the body, unto
 "the edifying of itself in love,"† was a plan
 of too strict an uniformity for the infinite di-
 vision of his mind.‡ The universal har-
 mony required to reign under a system
 bringing the same salvation to all, was less

† 1 Cor. i. 10. ‡ Ephes. iv. 15, 16.

‡ "Is Christ divided?" asks the apostle, afflicted at
 the spirit of dissention that marked his Grecian converts,
 1 Cor. i. 13. It was the effect of their national habit.
 Their old attachment to the discordant schools of the phi-
 losophers is seen again in the fondness of schism which
 consigned some of them to Paul, some to Apollos, Cephas,
 &c.

attractive

attractive than the noisy contentions of his ever clashing schools; and the truth, authoritatively pronounced by the voice of Christianity, was unheeded, because it was more agreeable to his changeful humour to seek it in the devious paths of human imagination.

Such were some of the obstacles arising to the Greek from the spirit of revelation. If, then, his reluctance towards it was so great on these accounts, how must it be increased, when, in addition to the argument drawn from its inward principles, he proceeded to survey the disadvantage of its external circumstances! It was at once lost in its demands, and incapable of enforcing its acceptance by any concomitant worldly power; nor would the Greek forwardly addict himself to a system, to which he could augur no durability, because the apparent means of its advancement were such as to

threaten

threaten its extinction in the very attempt. Happily, we of the present time, who have witnessed its progress, and partaken of its extension, can smile at the security with which he thus anticipated its speedy fall, from the want of that earthly authority, by which his own superstitions had gained their establishment, and to whose operation alone he could attribute its support.* While he heard the firm voice of the Gospel calling for the dereliction of Paganism, what were its existing circumstances, as surveyed by the calculating Greek? Its doctrines were every where in discredit, and its teachers despised; its founder had been ignominiously slain, and the same fate threatened the continuators of the obnoxious system. What, then,

* Julian undertakes to answer for Christ and his apostles, that they never could have expected such a national establishment of their doctrine, as himself had witnessed, *Μηδε ηλπισαν ες ταυτο αφικεσθαι ποτε δυναμεις, &c.* S. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 6. p. 206.

was

was the foundation of its boldness? none that the Greek could perceive. He saw Christianity thus adventurous in a situation the most forbidding; unprotected, nay, persecuted by the surrounding empire of Heathenism. What then were the human chances that this unpromising disparity should at any time be reversed? That the fierce and predominating hatred of the Gentile superstition should, one day, be surmounted by the mild authority of the Gospel? Plainly none. What wonder, then, if comparing the greatness of its demands with the meanness of its circumstances, he hardened himself still more in unbelief, and was confirmed in his rejection of the Gospel on account of the opposition which he discovered between its certain confidence, and its seeming weakness?

He might, indeed, have inferred, from the former evidence of its celestial descent, that

that its continuation would be also of a celestial nature, and its progress be conducted in a manner, necessarily differing from that of other systems springing from earth alone. But his mind, as we have seen, was already in a train of dissatisfaction sufficient to check the influence of this just conclusion; and whatever the distance between Christianity and Paganism in their respective origins, a prejudiced ingenuity was at hand to fill up the gap of dissimilitude; tried the probable advancement of revelation by the usual standard of the superstitions of the world, and pronounced its inevitable fall, because unfostered by the necessary presence of temporal power.

Those, which we have now mentioned, will be regarded rather as general causes of the rejection of the Gospel by the Greek: we will wind up our enumeration with two others, of a nature more peculiar, and characteristic

characteristic of his spirit. The first will apply itself to the higher classes of that people; the second to the lower; and the entire race will be comprehended within the two extremes.

Under his own religious systems, the Greek had been either incredulous or bigotted. From both propensities would arise disinclination towards the Gospel. In the former case, a fatal obstacle would be found in the previous exertions of his reasoning on his national worship. Had he embraced the history of Christ, he would have forfeited the conclusions of his beloved philosophy. When the Greek opened the eyes of his criticism on the existing superstitions of his country, he was shocked with the grossness which they presented to his reprobation. He deemed himself secure of the origin from which so much corruption had

had flowed; and it had been his pride to send things back to their supposed primitive purity. His boast was, to have simplified the theology of the vulgar, to have traced the fabulous matter of their religious machinery up to the fountain of unsubstantial thought, and to have refined the popular persuasion of future personal existence into the more attractive delicacy of present mental impression.* Here there was an obstacle that suddenly arose to offend the refinement of the Greek. The Gospel seemed to him to bring with it a revival of those notions which he had already laboured to explode,—notions, whose origin, unknown to the Greek, lay in the primitive communications of heaven, however disfigured in

* Atq. ea nimirum, quæcunque Acherunte profundo
Prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.

— in vita Divûm metus urget inanis, &c. See
Lucretius from line 991 to the end of his third book.

process of time, by the superadded fancies of man, incessantly working on the subject so interesting to his being. In external rites of innocent import, revelation had known, from an early time to assume a necessary condescension, and grafted its everlasting purposes on the existing stock of human institutions.* Now at length, when the agency of God towards his creatures was to be consummated, its principle must be vindicated from all imputed imperfection, and the former indications of the divine views crowned with that fullness of display which should

* *Ορα πως ανθρώπινως ποιεται προς αυτον της συνθηκας,* says St. Chrysostom, in admiration of the indulgence shewn by God to Abraham of the Chaldean mode of sacrifice to which the Patriarch had been accustomed. *Λαγ. λζ. P. 300.* We see a confirmation of this sentiment in St. Cyril, cont. Jul. Lib. 10. P. 360. *Συμβαδισαται δη εν ταις τε πρεσβυτε μικροψυχικαις ο των θλων θεος, και κατα γε το εντριβες χαλδαιαις συνετιθει του ορκου οικονομικως.* From the want of viewing the institutions of re-
velation

should at once illustrate and sanction their commencement. Therefore was the world finally made to witness the pure completion of that truth, which to the great molesta-

velation in this light, the resemblances of them, discovered in the heathen world, have been deemed by certain Christians of all ages, the impositions of Satan purposely mocking the divine appointments. *Tingit et ipse quosdam*, says Tertullian of the Devil's imitation of the sacraments, *celebrat et panis oblationem*. *De Præscrip.* C. 40. In addition to circumcision and baptism, De Solis gives a list of various Catholic rites, which, according to him, the counterfeit malice of Satan had prepared for the scandal of the faithful Spaniards in the new world, viz. confession of sins, a kind of communion involving transubstantiation, jubilees, processions, use of incense, and to (wind up the climax) the name itself of *Popes*, which the tempter had persuaded the Mexicans to bestow on their chief priests. *Riprove tutte ben chiare* (adds he) *che ei non aveva inventato a caso queste imitazioni, o fosse per profanare le sacre cirimonie, mescolandole con le sue abbominazioni, o perche gli duri ancora l'antica frenesia di volerli assomigliare all' Altissimo*. *Conquest of Mexico*. *Crusca translation*. Lib. 3. p. 352, &c.

tion

tion of the Greek, had been fondly diversified by human hopes and fears, from the time of its original intimation. The Gospel exhibited a God descending on earth for the benefit of man, and established on the firmest foundation, the doctrine of future personal retribution. Both these notions had been long since in discredit with our philosopher, who, together with the capricious machinery which human imagination had thrown around them, had discarded the immortal principle which lay beneath, who, if he seemed to allow a deity,* rigidly confined him to his heaven, and who had spurned alike the imaged expectation of eternal rewards, and eternal punishments. Thus situated, what was to be expected from the vanity of the Greek? Dereliction of his

* Epicurus (to whom we allude) was thought by some *Ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet* (mark again the persecuting spirit of the Athenians) *verbis reliquisse Deos, se sustulisse.* Cicero de Nat. Deor. Lib. I. c. 30.

former reasonings, and acquiescence in those truths which had already experienced his displeasure? No: his mind was too much warped to allow so afflictive a self-correction. Philosophy on the one hand, and scripture on the other, his taste was decided. The "wisdom of God" was to him "foolishness;" and his salvation suffered that his worldly knowledge might hold its course. Such was the condition of the more cultivated Greek. He rejected the offer of christianity, because, by accepting it, he would have deemed himself giving sudden countenance to that species of opinion which he had before laboured to explode; and the accredited system of the Gospel fell, in his undistinguishing contempt, together with the loose fables of his own Paganism.*

But

* We have quoted the opinions of one philosopher as a specimen. The same consequences might be traced from

But the vulgar Greek had also his objections, and the Gospel was doomed to suffer from the reluctance of either party. He, to whom the existing superstition was still acceptable, and who believed the fictions which had represented his deities as descending for their meaner purposes on earth, had furnished himself with notions equally liable, with those of his incredulous countrymen, to be startled at the relation of the Gospel. His superior beings, in the accom-

from the doctrines of Plato as well as of Epicurus. His *δημιουργοὶ θεοὶ* had been important enough to perform the lower parts of creation, and his *δαίμονες* to continue the signification of the divine will to man. Therefore, the system which represented the supreme Being on earth, must have been rejected by him as inconsistent with the supreme dignity. Apuleius, "De Deo Socratis," insists on the fundamental maxim of Plato, *Nullus Deus miscetur hominibus*, which he explains as we have stated it. Opinions, equally hostile to the Gospel, must have sprung from the superstitions of Zeno, and the scepticism of Carneades.

plishing

plishing of their designs, were uniformly supposed to give certain indications of themselves, though delayed for a while, to the objects of their visitation;* and at the winding up of actions, instituted amidst appearances merely mortal, betrayed, for the sake of conviction, some celestial property, leaving on the beholder a final impression

* See the address of Ulysses to Minerva on his discovery of her nature, *Odyss. Lib. 13, 312, &c.* Ἀργαλέον σε, θεα, γυναι, &c. For the Pagan opinion of these occult visitations of the Gods, see again *Odyss. Lib. 17, 485, &c.* Καὶ τὲ θεοὶ ξανοῖσιν εἰκοτὲς, &c. There was another, a more airy inspection of mankind, attributed to the Deities. Hesiod is very particular as to the number of them thus employed, *Τρεῖς γὰρ μυριοὶ αἰσιν—Ἥρα εἰσαμεινοί, παντὴ φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν.* *Op. et Dier. Lib. 1, 250.* See the fine picture, drawn by Callimachus, of Jupiter himself watching over the justice of the world:

Ἰζὺ δ' αὐτός

Ἀκρὸς ἐν πόλει σὺν ἐποψίῳ δὲ τε δίκησι

Ἄστυ ὑπὸ σκολιῆς, δὲ τε μπάλιν ἰδύνειν.

Hymn. ad Jov. L. 61, &c.

T

different

different from that which had been produced in the earlier stages of the achievement.

It is observable that this persuasion of the Greek accorded with the actual experience of the Jew;* and the heavenly beings, which are described in the Old Testament, as appearing on earth for the benefit of the chosen people, whether they were angels, or our Lord himself assuming other shapes

* This is one of the numberless instances that might be adduced to prove the descent of Pagan representations (perverted, for the most part, in their progress) from the actual proceedings of Heaven with the earlier inhabitants of the earth. As a specimen, compare Gen. ii. 21. with Odyss. 18. 187.—Numbers, xxii. 34. with Sophocl. Ajax Flag. L. 69, 83, &c.—Joshua, x. 13. with Odyss. 23, 243. and Apollodor. Bibl. Lib. 1. c. 6.—Exod. iv. 12. with Odyss. 3, 25, 30.—and Exod. xlii. 21. with the following fine passage of Xenophon, Πορευομένων δε, επει νυξ εγενετο, λεγεται Φως τῷ Κυρῳ και τῷ στρατευματι εκ τῶ θρανῶ προφανες γενεσθαι, ὡςε πάσι, Φρικὴν μὲν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἐγγιγνεσθαι, θαρσος δὲ πρὸς τῆς πολεμικῆς. Cyrop. Lib. 4. p. 256. ed. Hutch.

before

before his last coming in the flesh,* are represented as disclosing supernatural tokens, similar, in effects, to those attributed to the deities of Paganism. Their temporary figure either displayed a sudden glorification, or vanished from the eyes of the beholder. Of which sort, were the angel that appeared to Manoah, and “ascended in the flame of the altar,”† and he who talked with Gideon, and suddenly departed out of his sight.‡”

Accustomed, therefore, to the belief of ultimate splendor, compensating for previous condescension, the Greek was disap-

* See Patrick on Gen. xvi. 7. xviii. 10. and xxii. 11. That there were different opinions on this subject among the early Christians, as there have been in later times, may be inferred from the hint of Julian. Speaking of the command given to Abraham, Gen. xv. 9. he says, Την τε Φανετον αγγελον προρησιν, ητοι θεον. S. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 10. p. 358. He had already marked this, ο χρηματιζων αγγελος η θεος, p. 356.

† Judges, xiii. 20.

‡ Judges, vi. 21.

pointed of his traditional gratification, when he sought it in the incarnation of Christ. The latter stage of the Saviour's life was more miserable than any of the former; and he, who, during his mortal sojourning, "had not where to lay his head," was seen to be "crucified and slain." If the powers of nature were affected at his death, still that was not the precise sign which the Greek had usually regarded. It was not a circumstantial, but a personal token, that must satisfy him. If, when "the sun was darkened, and the earth quaked, and the graves were opened," if, at the sight of these attendant prodigies, the Centurian exclaimed, "This was the Son of God;" the greater number had demanded as the sole condition of their faith, the exclusive pledge to which the Greek was attached. "Save thyself," was the demand of "those that passed by;" and, "If thou
" be

“ be the Son of God, come down from the
“ cross.”*

The personal signs, which were withheld at that time, had indeed been granted at another, and were to be indulged more than once again. During his ministry, Christ had displayed the desired mark of glory in his transfiguration on the mount. “ His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”† After his resurrection, an indication, equivalent to the former, was given by him to the disciples at Emmaus, “ Their eyes were
“ opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.”‡ The final token of this kind, afforded by him, was that of his ascension. “ It came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted
“ from them, and carried up into heaven.”§

* St. Matth. xxvii. 40. † St. Matth. xvii. 2.

‡ St. Luke, xxiv. 31. § St. Luke, xxiv. 51.

But

But it was not to Pagan eyes that these characteristic signs were indulged. They were witnessed only by the disciples of Christ, who were the relaters of them to the rest of the world. And what more repugnant to the pride of the Greek, than not only to want ocular testimony himself, but to accept the report of the hated Jew?*

But in mercy, we humbly hope, were these indications withheld from others, whose infidelity was already determined; for even with that evidence they would not have believed; and accumulated perverseness must have brought on itself an encrease of punishment. However, the Greek was not to be thus satisfied. Offended at the

* Julian had taken the same exception against the earlier revelations made to the Jews, and not to the rest of the world. *Εἰ γὰρ πάντων ἡμῶν εἰς θεοῦ, καὶ πάντων δημιουργοῦ δμῶν, αἵ τι περιεῖθεν ἡμᾶς;* S. Cyr. cont. Jul. Lib. 3. p. 106.

want

want of correspondence between the Gospel and his own expectations, he sacrificed the one to the other; or, hearing that correspondence asserted by those to whom he was already disinclined, he equally rejected the truth, on account of the unacceptable quarter from which it came; and the vulgar became thus connected in unbelief with the more refined. Such were the peculiar obstacles thrown in the way of that people by the respective reasoning of the several parties among them. They were universally disinclined to the Gospel, the high together with the low, the learned with the unlearned, the sceptical with the credulous; and Christianity laboured to no purpose between an abstracted philosophy on the one hand, and a multiplied superstition on the other.

But were there none, then, to whom revelation was proposed with due effect?

None,

None, who were not involved in the crime either of the Jew or the Greek? Yes, thanks be to God; faith had soon her ample triumph over original infidelity. The "kingdoms of the world" hastened to become "the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ;"* and that which had been a "stumbling block," and "foolishness," was made "the power of God and the wisdom of God,"† to all believers. Only it became us to shew, by what perverseness of mind, opposition first sprung up to a doctrine "worthy of all acceptance."

Such, then, has been the progress of our thoughts concerning the Jew and the Greek. The former has been impelled to the acceptance of a spiritual Messiah by the perpetual dependence of his political condition, and by the ascendancy of his religi-

* Revelations, xi. 15. † 1 Corinth. i. 23, 24.

ous destination ; while the cause of his infidelity is the frustrated hope of a temporal sovereignty. The latter has been invited to the Gospel by the adaptation of its miracles and doctrines to the principles of his own criticism. But the conviction afforded by this mode of reasoning he also disclaims, on account of the irksome obedience commanded by the Gospel, and his unwillingness to submit, in peace, to the sovereignty of any system ; especially that which wanted the means of promoting its reception by the attendant influence of worldly authority. Of his remaining objections, one is furnished by a philosophy equally prejudiced against all religions, the other drawn from a superstitious spirit obstinately attached to the institutions of its national worship.

But shall we have entered into a disquisition, gratifying to curiosity alone, and not capable of solid use ? “ Do we so fight,

U

“ as

“as one that beateth the air?”* God forbid. For each of the arguments here adduced will apply itself to the confirmation of our own faith. The inferences drawn for the Jew from the conduct of his history, are equally calculated for the Christian, since they comfort us with the assurance that we have received the true Messiah whom he disallowed. Meanwhile, the cause of his erroneous rejection will hardly tempt our minds to a dangerous imitation. It was a national cause, affecting only the sons of Israel. Our own faith, therefore remaining uncontaminated by the enquiry, we safely contemplate the infidelity of the Jew.

Our views, we confess, were not so remote in our treatment of the Greek. If, in the present times, there are any disinclined to the Gospel, they are such as would tread

* 1 Cor. ix. 26.

in his steps rather than in those of the Jew ; —would affect the philosophical scepticism of the one, in preference to the more fullen and interested refusal of the other. Therefore, to them we have spoken through the person of the earlier unbeliever. Them we have endeavoured to persuade, by arguments appropriated to their assumed modes of thinking. But in them also we find the fatal objection which first strikes us in their corrupt models. It is the dreaded pain of religious obedience which tempts them to the profession of infidelity. If, in spite of its divine evidence, authority is still denied by them to the Gospel, it is that its purity may not restrain them, and that they may deem themselves at liberty to “commit all iniquity with greediness.” But let this awful truth be well remembered: whether we believe or disbelieve, the great purposes of the Gospel are travelling onwards to their accomplishment. And happy they

they, who, before the dreadful day of account, when the hidden motives of all our actions shall be produced “before men” and angels,” can surmount the prejudices of earthly corruption which degraded the Jew,—the influence of a vain philosophy which perverted the Greek;—and penetrated with a due sense of that revelation which calls them to itself, can cry out to its divine Author, in the language of earnest faith, renouncing all other confidence, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

* St. John, vi. 68, 69.

FINIS.



ERRATA

Page 30. l. 21. *For* ζδαζατε, *read* δαζατε.

41. l. 6. *For* tract, *read* track.

55. l. 3. *For* entirely, *read* uniformly.

59. l. 2. *For* essential *read* especial.

77. l. 14. *For* superstition *read* supposition.

89. l. 8. *For* controuls *read* controuled.

104. Note *refers to* page 17.

151. l. 10. *For* there *read* then.

